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EDITORIAL

PREFERRED MANAGEMENT?

President Bush begins his Administration in a frame of mind and a manner of speaking that could have been copied from Michael Dukakis's acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention. Competence, not ideology, seems to describe the Bush project. With few exceptions, the new President has peopled his Cabinet with levelers rather than sharpeners, gray managers who seek to contain imminent crises rather than advance new strategies to resolve them.

It's a far cry from the first hundred days of 1981, when Reaganism was running at full throttle. Then, the President's men embarked on a radical plan to redistribute wealth upward at home and roll back insurgent forces abroad, to militarize the national budget, to destroy collective endeavor and privatize communal life. From the creation of the *contras* to the restriction of social spending for America's poor, Reaganism represented an ideological break with a half-century of presidential political practice.

Reagan's repression did provoke a progressive response on the left, culminating in an impressive show of strength in the 1986 and 1988 election campaigns, and joined even by Dukakis in the last days of his drive. Almost all the voters who made up their minds in the final three weeks of the campaign voted for him.

What they liked was the economic populism Dukakis had embraced, the visions of social justice he expressed. Now powerful Democratic voices are demanding that those visions be suppressed. Joseph Califano Jr., late of the Kennedy Pentagon and the Carter Cabinet, suggested recently that only a candidate who renounces "many programs aimed at disadvantaged blacks" and denounces Jesse Jackson can win white votes and the Presidency. If that becomes Democratic ideology, we could almost be grateful we got Republican management instead.

THE NORTH TRIAL
Frances FitzGerald

WHAT BLEW UP FLIGHT 103?
David Corn

BRITAIN'S NEW ANTI-GAY LAW
Michael H. Hodges

RAISING HELL AND HOPE
Jim Hightower

'PRIVATE LIFE'
Edward Peters

'DANGEROUS LIAISONS'
Stuart Klawans

1789 AND ALL THAT

DANCING ON THE GRAVE OF REVOLUTION

DANIEL SINGER

Long live the Revolution—as long as it is dead and buried with no prospect of resurrection. That thought springs to mind as the French begin to celebrate the bicentennial of their Great Revolution. The program is most impressive. Books and documents published or reissued for the occasion run into the hundreds. In Paris alone fifty-six conferences devoted to the subject are scheduled for this year, not counting the massive exhibition on Europe and the French Revolution, various smaller exhibits and innumerable plays, operas, concerts and other shows (including *1789*, a Maurice Béjart ballet based on Beethoven's symphonies). Provincials and Parisians alike are already flocking to *La Liberté ou la Mort*, a spectacular play that reconstructs the most famous scenes from the Revolution. But the climax will come, naturally, on July 14, when French President François Mitterrand will be accompanied by such iconoclastic sans-culottes as George Bush, Maggie Thatcher and Helmut Kohl—a party that appears more suited to honor Marie Antoinette than commemorate the storming of the Bastille.

This is not the only irony of history. The paradox begins with the very patron of this revolutionary jamboree. Mitterrand's new claim to fame is to have "normalized" his country and brought it into the realm of compromise and consensus—in other words, to have deprived it of its revolutionary heritage, the belief in the possibility of radical change through political action. No wonder, then, that the media

(*Continued on Page 165*)

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LETTERS.

A TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES

New York City

As reporter and photographer (respectively) for the New York *Daily Challenge*, we think we attended the same conference Jon Wiener wrote about in "Campus Voices Right and Left" [Dec. 12, 1988]. At panels and among attendees interviewed, we failed to find the iron divisions—"different generations had different agendas"—that Wiener did. It was generally thoughtful and stimulating, and as we tried to attend each panel, we were struck by many, young and old, who said they learned a great deal.

We found an absence of nit-picking, tin-Marxist rhetoric and "hooray for my theory/faction" voices. Here was a serious effort to assess a problem rather than establish who was smartest. Panels took questions and statements, but speeches for a favorite golden answer or guru were rarely uncorked. Teeth remained ungnashed on this or that foe or old score, and in the women's panel Angela Davis defended Gloria Steinem. If the injured and angry harbored old compulsions, they diligently avoided public scratching or self-serving cant.

Wiener tells Jack O'Dell and Virginia Durr tales that establish his celebrity index but fails to mention their evaluation of the Red issue in the civil rights movement. He neglects to point out that O'Dell, Julian Bond and more than a dozen black panelists at the conference electrified audiences by detailing the ways racist stereotypes prepared the white American body politic for anticommunism.

For most of the 1,300 participants a pervasive friendliness blended with a pensive, measured effort to dissect a force that has chewed up a nation's brain, heart and purse. The conference was weak not in purpose or unity but in shaping educational strategies that can reach the public. But this hardest of problems will require many other conferences.

Wiener's facile word dance conveys none of this. His smug "they're rigid, silly left, and I'm smart left" approach belongs in *The Village Voice*. With an antiquated antenna, a smirk and a gossip's ear, he sallied around the edges of a thoughtful conference and heard little. Then he rounded up the usual suspects.

Wiener and *The Nation* at least covered it, which is more than the mainstream media did. Since each panel presentation and audience partipation was audiotaped, people interested in what took place can contact Audio Transcripts Ltd., 610 Madison Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. This landmark conference should not and need not fade away.

William Loren Katz
Laurie Lehman

RIGHTING WORDS

Philadelphia

In his account of my speech before the National Association of Scholars, Jon Wiener took liberties with accuracy that do justice neither to me nor to readers of *The Nation*.

First: According to Wiener, I urged colleagues to oppose efforts to protect women at universities from sexual harassment in the form of "unwanted sexual remarks or actions," seeing antiharassment policies thus designed as "threatening professors' academic freedom." Here is, from a recording, what I actually said: "The antiharassment movements on American campuses arise from a real problem: how to deal with illegal harassment. No student should be victimized or stigmatized on the basis, indeed, of race or gender. No student should be subject to sexual coercion or unwanted sexual attention in an academic setting." Stating my opposition to "thought reform" in the guise of "racial awareness and sensitivity seminars" as sentences for harassment, I reiterated that I favored "fixed behavioral penalties for behavioral infractions."

My complaint was with something else: "But what has arisen to deal with the real problem of harassment are two things above all which have become vehicles for assaults upon academic freedom and intellectual tolerance," namely, the transference into the classroom of the workplace notion that no one should be "offended" by speech concerning race and gender and the privileging of *one* politicized view of who may take offense and why. It would be sad if feminists and radicals truly disagreed with my actual conclusion about the fatal danger of seeking to ban "offensive" speech and advocacy, "that education is frequently 'offense,' that 'offense' cannot be avoided in education."

Second: According to Wiener, I brought the crowd to its feet with a call to "'use ridicule' against blacks, gays and feminists." I indeed called for the use of "ridicule" against representatives of movements based upon the morally unsupportable notion "that we are on campuses . . . of group minds, and group think and group identities, rather than on campuses of critical *individual* minds." And I added: "What is ridiculed on legitimate grounds of ridicule ceases to impress and persuade. We must become the Voltaires of our campuses, for they surely are the voices of repression, of intolerance and of thought control."

Wiener's reference to the generic category of "gays" is based on a gross misunderstanding of my speech. Arguing that the new "awareness" seminars and agencies always become the property of "the ideologues," I cited the specific campus agencies and groups given privileged roles under new policies at my university to define the new codes of conduct and to instruct students officially about them: "the Women's Center, affirmative action offices, Lesbians and Gays at Penn." The latter is a specific organization, LGAP, which does not in my opinion have the right to speak for the great diversity of lesbian and gay students, faculty, staff and administrators. I believe without reservation in the absolute dignity and equal rights of lesbians and gays, and also in liberation as the right to individuate without official group identity. Thus, when I used the terms "Women's Center" and "Lesbians and Gays at Penn," I put each into quotation marks with flicks of my fingers on outstretched arms. (Wiener: "Waving his arms and yelling. . . .") I also objected to "the heart of the feminist and black-liberationist paradigm, that radical feminist theory is women's experience, that radical black analysis is *the* voice of a diversified American black community. Nothing of course could be more sexist nor more racist than the assumption that these congeries, 'female experience,' 'black experience,' can be reified into such programs."

Third: According to Wiener, I declaimed against "the dangers of 'tolerance and diversity.'" What I had denounced, in fact, was the use of such words "in chillingly Orwellian fashion by their proponents: 'diversity,' 'pluralism,' 'tolerance,' 'civility,' meaning, indeed, in almost all instances, the reverse of what one would take them to mean. . . . They are now synonyms for the inapplicability of an artificial construct, 'white, male standards,' deemed to inform all who do not agree with new-age consciousness on campuses and to justify *anything* undertaken in the name of affirmative action, above all, reverse discrimination." Obviously, my claim here is that such values are being subverted today by ideological zealots on American campuses, not that I should be pleased to see their further subversion.

Jon Wiener and I surely disagree on most political matters, and the great majority of *Nation* readers surely agree with his analyses of American society and education rather than with mine, but at least let us know our actual differences honestly.

Alan Charles Kors
University of Pennsylvania

WIENER REPLIES

New York City

William Katz and Laurie Lehman misunderstand my account of the Harvard conference on anticommunism. Eschewing the *Village Voice* approach, I quoted Arlene Goldbard's statement that "anticommunism has shrunk our ability to imagine and discuss alternative futures," and praised David Montgomery's assessment of the costs of anticommunism for domestic policy. When I wrote that Ben & Jerry's donated the ice cream, I wasn't smirking, I was smiling.

Alan Kors did tell his right-wing audience in New York in November that he opposes "illegal harassment" of women, blacks and gays. That's not news, and it's not what his

(*Continued on Page 176*)

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CONTENTS.

Volume 248, Number 5

LETTERS
146

EDITORIALS
145 Preferred Management?
147 Get Tough
148 Bob Lekachman
149 The North Case *Frances FitzGerald*

COLUMNS
150 Beat the Devil *Alexander Cockburn*
152 Beltway Bandits *David Corn and Jefferson Morley*

ARTICLES
153 The C.I.A. Explosive: Did It Blow Up Flight 103? *David Corn*
154 The Legacy of Lydda: Four Decades of Blood Vengeance *Amos Kenan*
156 Government by Tabloid: No Gays, Please. We're British *Michael H. Hodges*
160 "I Do Not Choose to Run": Raising Issues, Hope and Hell *Jim Hightower*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
145 1789 and All That: Dancing on the Grave of Revolution *Daniel Singer*
168 Novick: That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and The American Historical Profession *Roy Rosenzweig*
170 Veyne, ed.: A History of Private Life, Vol. I: From Pagan Rome To Byzantium
Duby, ed.: A History of Private Life, Vol. II: Revelations of the Medieval World *Edward Peters*
172 Berch: Radical by Design: The Life And Style of Elizabeth Hawes *Barbara Jones*
173 Films *Stuart Klawans*

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EDITORIALS.

Get Tough

Imagine that the following group took over the government: an elected official who had passed confidential information to a foreign power; a businessman who once joined in a secret venture with a dictator; a diplomat who covertly and unofficially aided a paramilitary force; and a spy who seemingly had engaged in a cover-up. Each of these descriptions fits one of George Bush's presidential appointments.

Bush's would-be Cabinet is a gathering of familiar faces, mostly "moderate" Republicans. As such, his high-level appointments are not expected to face much heat at their forthcoming confirmation hearings. But there are plenty of good questions to ask. For Democratic senators free of honeymoon ardor, here are some suggested targets.

Robert Mosbacher: Bush has rewarded his campaign finance chair with the top job at the Commerce Department. The Senate shouldn't let Mosbacher assume the post until it investigates the oil millionaire's dealings with Ferdinand Marcos. As detailed by *The Village Voice* last

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September, in 1973 Mosbacher signed an oil drilling contract with Marcos, who approved the agreement as both the representative of the Philippines and a not-too-secret beneficiary of the deal. The Commerce Secretary-in-waiting either wittingly or unwittingly helped Marcos pillage Philippine resources. Mosbacher was forced out of the oil scheme in 1977, but he left with a $1.8 million payment from Marcos, which may have been hush money.

Edward Derwinski: Derwinski, who served twenty-four years in Congress, has been named head of the new Department of Veterans Affairs. A supporter of the brutal South Korean government, in 1977 he passed word to a Korean diplomat that a high-ranking Korean intelligence officer was about to defect to the F.B.I. Derwinski's loose lips put the defector in mortal danger. He denied leaking the information at first but later confessed, during a closed-door meeting of the Senate in 1983. What makes Bush's selection of Derwinski as the nation's number one vet so ironic is that he served as co-chair in the Bush campaign's ethnic outreach committee and chair of the G.O.P.'s Heritage Groups (Nationalities) Council, both of which harbored members with pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic sympathies.

Elizabeth Dole: When Dole controlled the stick at the Department of Transportation, aviation safety declined and airline mergers threatened service and caused higher ticket prices. Under Dole, the D.O.T. also displayed less-than-rigorous regard for auto safety regulations. Bush has now tagged Dole to run the Labor Department. It's fair for the Senate to wonder if Dole will do to the work force what she did to airline travel. But then maybe that's the point.

Thomas Pickering and Donald Gregg: With these two appointments—Pickering to be U.N. ambassador and Gregg to be the envoy to South Korea—Senate Democrats have good reason to return to the Iran/*contra* affair. When Pickering was U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, according to his own testimony to Congressional investigators, he assisted unofficially in arranging a donation of more than $1 million worth of military supplies to the *contras* during the time the Boland amendment prohibited U.S. military aid to them.

Gregg, a C.I.A. veteran who became Bush's vice-presidential national security adviser, has been the fire wall between the new President and the scandal. Gregg had repeated contacts with Felix Rodriguez, a former C.I.A. agent and important player in the secret *contra* resupply network, yet Gregg insists that neither he nor Bush knew of Rodriguez's endeavors until after the scandal became public. Even when a memorandum surfaced stating that Rodriguez was scheduled to brief Bush in May 1986 on the "resupply of the Contras," Gregg simply said he could not explain the document.

Manuel Lujan Jr.: Bush's Interior Secretary nominee, this former member of Congress boasts an environmental voting record that would make James Watt proud. Last year he refused to sign a letter calling for quick action on clean air and acid rain legislation. He has voted to cut billions of dollars from water pollution control programs and opposes creation of an American Conservation Corps.

Lawrence Eagleburger and John Tower: The Senate should explore what Tower, Bush's choice for Defense Secretary, did for all those military contractors he worked for after he left the Senate in 1985. As a past member of the club, however, Tower can anticipate a relatively polite interrogation.

Eagleburger, who has been picked for the number two slot at the State Department, returns to government service after a four-and-a-half-year stay at Henry Kissinger's international consulting firm. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee should request a list of that business's clients to determine who has been paying Eagleburger's way and who might do so again once he leaves office.

As the Reagan Administration ended, the ethics office of the Justice Department said the slippery conduct of former Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d "should not be tolerated of any government employee." The same can be said of scores of other Reagan appointees. George Bush claims he wants a more ethical and competent government. The Senate should take him at his word.

Bob Lekachman

Economics is said to be the "dismal" science. How then to account for the often hilarious, always perceptive, never dismal prose of economist Robert Lekachman, who died January 14 after a long struggle with cancer?

He was a teacher, author and activist; a contributing editor to several periodicals and a resigner as contributing editor to at least two of them; he was a self-described "Keynes freak," a book reviewer, an avid consumer of espionage thrillers, scourge of the neoconservatives, advice-giver to the perplexed policy-maker ("Dear Doctor Lekachman" was the name of his sometime *Nation* column). In short, Robert Lekachman was not your average City University of New York distinguished professor, a post he held since 1973.

He seldom missed an opportunity to skewer his fellow economists with his sardonic pen. He called a work by Jude Wanniski "a hymn to the unique virtues of selfishness, or as we economists say, maximization." President Carter's Prince of Deregulation, Alfred Kahn, was just another economist "in an Administration exceptionally afflicted by his colleagues." It was this style that set his books apart, especially *Greed Is Not Enough* (Pantheon, 1982) and *Visions and Nightmares: America After Reagan* (Macmillan, 1987), his withering indictments of maximization.

Despite his illness, Lekachman was ready for the Bush continuum. The week he died he published an open letter to the new President in *The Nation*, "F.D.R. Changed, and So Can You." What distinguished Lekachmanomics, over and above its originator's relaxed style, was his blatant concern for the poor, the dispossessed, society's outcasts. Michael Harrington, co-chair of Democratic Socialists of America, of which Lekachman was a card-carrying member, recalls his colleague emerging from chemotherapy to address a major labor rally. This, incidentally, is the same Harrington

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of whose book Lekachman wrote, "Harrington has convinced and mobilized me, but then I was convinced and mobilized even before I read this volume."

Lekachman once confessed that "as a reviewer, I most enjoy a thoroughly bad book, full of detestable sentiments phrased in execrable prose by a perpetrator of poor character, say, the latest volume of Richard Nixon's memoirs." But he immediately followed this curmudgeonly disclaimer with extravagant praise for the humanist volume under consideration.

He was convinced and mobilized, tough and gentle and wise. We miss him already.

The North Case

The recent dismissal of the conspiracy and fraud charges against Oliver North should result in a fairer trial for North and make the job of special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh a good deal easier. At the same time, it raises serious questions about the capacity of an independent counsel to prosecute a government official involved in the national security arena.

The reason for the dismissal was, of course, the refusal of the Attorney General to declassify some of the 300 documents requested by Walsh in the unredacted form demanded by Judge Gerhard Gesell. Under the 1980 Classified Information Procedures Act (CIPA), the government has a right in the case of Federal criminal trials to review the classified information the prosecution and defense will ask for, with the consent of the court, before the trial begins. The law was enacted to prevent "graymail"—by which a defendant forces the government to drop its case by threatening to reveal important state secrets once the trial is under way. Under CIPA, the Attorney General may submit the classified material to a government review panel; but it is he who decides what can or cannot be released (and thus whether the trial will go forward).

When the Attorney General is trying the case, the tension between his role as a prosecutor and as a Cabinet member theoretically puts him in a good position to weigh the interests of national security against those of the law. But in writing the law Congress did not contemplate a situation in which those functions—and therefore those interests—might be divided between two people: an Attorney General and an independent counsel. In the case of the North trial, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh refused Walsh's request on the advice of an interagency panel composed of senior Administration officials, some of whom, like George Shultz, were in office at the time of the Iran/*contra* affair. Congress apparently paid no attention to this strange procedure until after Walsh decided to move for dismissal. The House and Senate Intelligence Committees will eventually be asking some questions about the Attorney General's decision. They should also ask some questions about the system itself.

The documents requested by Walsh, and the additional 300 to be requested by North's attorney, Brendan Sullivan, probably do not contain significant new information about the diversion of funds from the Iran arms sales. (The counsels for the Iran/*contra* committees assume they have seen the relevant documents, and only if John Poindexter changed his sworn testimony could the diversion be linked to the President.) But those requested by Sullivan probably do contain information about other covert operations North was carrying out with authorization from his superiors.

This material has at least the potential to harm or embarrass the President or other senior officials—or to prove embarrassing to the Administration as a whole. To ask senior Administration officials to review it is to put them in a clear conflict of interest. This would still be the case even if the material were not embarrassing to anyone, for national security officials have an understandable reluctance to declassify documents they have generated and themselves classified. In addition, they have no institutional interest—as the Attorney General would in, say, a spy trial—in seeing that the charges are prosecuted. If an independent counsel is to be truly independent in a case involving national security, he or she must have a truly independent review panel. How it would be chosen and who would do the choosing would be important features of an amended CIPA law.

Unhappy though we may be at the prospect of his getting off, the dismissal of the conspiracy charges against Oliver North is all to the good, for in principle the conspiracy statutes infringe on the civil liberties of citizens. The dismissal of those charges may also be beneficial to the prosecution, for in order to convict North of conspiracy and fraud, Walsh would first have had to prove the diversion of funds illegal (a conclusion reached by the majority but not the minority report of the Iran/*contra* committees) and then prove that North intended to commit a crime. As it is, Walsh has merely to show that North lied about the diversion to various agencies of government, the Congressional committees among them. He should be able to proceed on the obstruction of justice charges and those of petty theft, for the documents he will apparently require have already been declassified by the Iran/*contra* committees.

In this case, therefore, justice may well be served by the Attorney General's decision. But the consequence is unintended. The system itself must be changed or the decision will suggest to future Administrations that, when national security is involved, a crime is not a crime unless the executive branch wants it to be one. FRANCES FITZGERALD

Frances FitzGerald is a member of The Nation*'s editorial board and the author, most recently, of* Cities on a Hill *(Simon and Schuster).*

AWARD

The Eugene V. Debs Foundation has given its ninth annual Bryant Spann Memorial Prize to Jack Newfield for "Mayor Daley Is Alive and Well in N.Y.C.," an article on Mayor Edward Koch that appeared in *The Nation* of April 4, 1987.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Hymn to Pragma

There's nothing the press likes so much as the notion of pragmatism. The word connotes aversion to ideas, theory, ideology, conviction, principle; exhibits enthusiasm for compromise, business as usual, common sense and all the other traditional fauna in the mental barnyard of the average member of the fourth estate.

With Bush the press is having a field day. "Bush Enlists Economic Agnostics Who Share Belief in What Works," announced the headline over Peter Kilborn's front-page article on Bush's economic advisers in *The New York Times* for January 16. The next day in an identical position was another *Times* article, by Elaine Sciolino, calling Bush "a problem-solver rather than a visionary thinker." It was in typical pragmatic fashion that Bush's campaign advisers had him defend ideology against Dukakis's pragmatic attacks.

Variants of both the headline and Sciolino's description may be found in hundreds of newspapers across the country pondering the personnel and ideological posture of the Bush Administration. The logical implication is that Brady, Darman, Boskin and the rest of Bush's economic team have no ideas, no values, and would be as happy with war communism, Hitler's version of Keynesianism applied after 1933 or any other strategy they might run into on the library shelf.

So now we have Boskin as chairman of Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, whose best-known contribution to economic agnosticism is the "flexible freeze," a meaningless stratagem to get George Bush through the election campaign in one piece. Boskin himself is entirely indistinguishable from Lawrence Summers, Dukakis's economic guru and prospective C.E.A. chief. With Bush as *problem-solver* we have a meaty, protein-crammed twinned-noun description, leaving the wild-eyed *visionaries* in the dust along with Wilhelm Reich, Velikovsky, the Anabaptists and the man who dreamed up the Nawapa Project.

Every Time I Say Goodbye, I Die a Little

I paid my *adieux* to Ron in this column a couple of weeks ago, but it's hard not to wrench out the sob-sodden kerchief for one last wave. As Reagan heads west twenty-six months after the *Contra*gate scandal broke, consider the fact that no one yet knows or, given the recent decision by Lawrence Walsh, probably ever will know what he authorized, whether he lied to the Tower commission or what Bush knew. Unlike Watergate, *Contra*gate was a cover-up that worked.

It was always easy to laugh at Reagan and to underestimate him. The East Coast elite distrusted him even as late as the 1980 campaign, trying to head off his nomination by running Gerald Ford again. Learning of the Ford bid, Reagan, on Robert Scheer's account, turned to an aide and cried, "What have they got against me? I support big oil. I support big business. Why don't they trust me?" Probably because they thought he would blow them up, along with everyone else. He didn't, but they never did trust him, though they had a hell of a party while he was around.

The people who did trust Reagan were mostly white men, small businessmen, rednecks, some (sometimes many) union people, construction workers, many ordinary folk up and down the map who wanted a world much as it had been in the mid-1950s. Them he betrayed. The wellspring of American nativism that nourished Reagan has been tapped dry for a while, and at least for this we should thank the old man as he makes for the big rancho in the cielo.

Footnote: On this matter of cover-up I should note the arrest of John Hull, the Indiana rancher whose spread in northern Costa Rica has been much discussed in connection with the *contra*-drug link. Hull has been hauled off by the Costa Rican constabulary on charges of spying and drug smuggling. One of the big disappointments of 1988 (and a big pointer to the success of the above-mentioned cover-up) was the failure of the much-touted hearings organized by Senator John Kerry into *contra* drug dealing. Kerry's chief investigator, Jack Blum, took a dim view of witnesses against Hull, who spoke in copious and damning detail but who also were encumbered with felony convictions for drug smuggling and money laundering. Blum was just inscribing in the committee's final draft report the view that those alleging *contra* drug connections were liars and ticket punchers when news came of Hull's arrest.

Shamir to School Kids: Drop Dead

Back in the late spring of last year Jane Serling-Boyd was talking to her second-grade Hebrew class at the Beth El synagogue in Durham, North Carolina, about the situation in Israel and the occupied territories. She told the children that Jews and Arabs had been fighting, that both sides had done bad things and that violence was wrong. Then ten of her students suggested they send Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir letters asking for peace.

Serling-Boyd got her pupils started by having them write that they were Jews in North Carolina and then let them take it from there. She didn't really expect an answer but got one from Shamir's office, dated July 6 and signed by Z.H. Hurwitz, an adviser to Shamir. Hurwitz acknowledged "the so-called letters of the children" and sharply criticized Serling-Boyd. "If this is what you are implanting into the minds of the children you are doing them a great disservice," Hurwitz wrote, adding that children should be taught to love the land of Israel and not " 'Peace Now' propaganda. . . . There is a special name reserved for those who manipulate the minds of little children. It is one of the most serious of sins."

This distressed Serling-Boyd, who had lived in Israel for a year when she was 18. She contacted her Representative, David Price, and Senator Terry Sanford (hot-air merchant and love object of the pragmatists). She also wrote to *The New York Times* and *The Jerusalem Post*, neither of which printed her letter. Finally, on December 2, the Raleigh *News and Observer* described the episode. Reporter Joseph Berryhill contacted Hurwitz, who told him, "I'm not sure that

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7-year-olds of their own free will would write that kind of letter. This was obviously a campaign—an exercise—initiated by the teacher, for whatever reason."

"We were trying to tell the person in charge of Israel to try to stop the war," said Ben Kudler, a boy in the class, adding that Hurwitz's letter made him "kind of mad."

More to the taste of Shamir's office no doubt were the mealy-mouthed strophes from Elie Wiesel in the December issue of *Midstream*, asking, "Why should I, a Jew in the diaspora, go farther than Labor ministers who, for all practical purposes, submit to government solidarity?" At least Wiesel is no longer regarded as immune to attack. Irving Howe had some critical words for him at the recent *Tikkun* conference in New York. One of the marks of a changed era is the way the mainstream press now turns to *Tikkun* for comment on developments in the Middle East, the way it did formerly to Poddy at *Commentary*. This is positive, but *Tikkun*—which means, to all intents and purposes, its editor, Michael Lerner—is pretty jelly-kneed all the same, sedately riding in the No Talks With the P.L.O. section of the bus until it was finally politic to change seats. Timing is not the same as leadership.

No Pragmatist at Heart

The one thing you could say about Shamir is that unlike the Bush gang he is not a pragmatist. These days the U.S. press is touting the line that Shamir might be, in the last analysis, flexible. This is nonsense. Shamir, like the old I.R.A. men of the same period who once had fraternal relations with the Stern Gang, has deeply held beliefs, most of them stemming from Lehi and its first leader and ideologue, Avraham Stern. He is not going to abandon those, and the Bush Administration had better remember that.

Israel Shahak wrote an interesting piece in *Middle East International* for November 18, 1988, describing Shamir's ideological heritage. Among its elements: the belief that an enlarged Jewish state will dominate not only the "East" but also the "shores of the Mediterranean." Last year an Israeli rabbi published an atlas claiming for Israel all the islands of the eastern Mediterranean, and forthwith was received in Shamir's office with many expressions of support. Lehi itself proposed the rebuilding of the temple "as a sign of total Redemption." Such rebuilding would involve the destruction of the Dome of the Rock. According to Shahak there are signs that Shamir deems this a real possibility. He recently met with one of those who is demanding such rebuilding and who has already prepared the sacred robes in which the High Priest is to offer sacrifices.

People who basically believe in nothing but making money have great trouble understanding those who work off a different agenda. Shamir has declared that the *intifada* is merely the continuation of the eternal war that has run from the time of the Hasmoneans (166 B.C.) without interruption. As Shahak rightly observes, "No one will now claim that the actual course of events either in 17th century Britain, or to take a better example in Iran of our times, can be understood without considering also the ideological component together with all the other political factors." Shamir has an ideology, and the only place in it for Palestinians is the graveyard, or the next bus out of town.

Heart of Darkness Department

Iran, whose leaders take ideology as seriously as Shamir, has somewhat dropped out of the news since the halt in the Iran-Iraq war. The situation there is ghastly. Estimates vary but a number of sources report that 1,000 to 5,000 political prisoners have been executed since last August's cease-fire. In a December 7 editorial the London *Independent* stated, "It is safe to assume . . . that the rate of killing is rising rapidly." Amnesty International believes this represents the worst official violence since the early 1980s.

The mullahs appear to be cleaning house before February's celebration of the tenth year of the revolution, hanging prisoners, placing them before firing squads and dynamiting whole prisons. On one account, all political prisoners in the city of Hamadan were shot. In Teheran, Jadeh Khavaran Cemetery, known as the Place of the Damned, is crammed with shallow, unmarked graves. The victims are overwhelmingly of the left: most from the People's Mujahedeen, others from the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party, which has had at least thirty of its top leaders executed. (Khomeini has always been rabidly anticommunist. At the time of the revolution he called Marxists "satanic elements, worse than the Shah," although Tudeh supported him.) Mullahs critical of the regime's recent overtures to the West have also been shot or arrested.

When the executions got under way last summer the Iranian press published some reports, such as this one in the daily *Jomhouriy-e Eslami* for August 9:

> The people of Islamabad were fascinated by a new scene in the town's main square, in which they took great delight. The metal structure of a half-finished two-story construction provided the scene on which the people's gaze was fixed. Bodies were hanging from the bare metal girders on the second floor, looking like motionless pendulums. Three agents of the atheistic grouplet had been hanged . . . on charges of betraying their fatherland.

The executions have been condemned by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, normally portrayed as a creature of Third World propaganda by the State Department and the U.S. press. For its part, the U.S. government is not overly upset about the executions. Iran has been trying to attract foreign investment and, according to a *Times* article for January 2 by the indefatigable Sciolino, "the State and Commerce Departments have received hundreds of inquiries from American businessmen wanting to know about doing business in Iran." Sciolino mentioned that executions had been carried out and noted that the State Department had expressed its "deep concern" but chose not to make an official protest. "American officials and Western diplomats," she wrote, "said the executions would not hinder a move toward better relations."

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN AND JEFFERSON MORLEY

■ The Case of the Bugged Senator

Did the National Security Agency listen in on the phone conversation of a U.S. senator? Margaret Newsham, a former employee of Lockheed and the N.S.A., says yes. Last summer, she told Representative Louis Stokes, then chair of the House Intelligence Committee, that the N.S.A. has used its communications intercept equipment to eavesdrop on U.S. citizens. According to the Cleveland *Plain Dealer*, which ran the only press account of her meeting with Stokes, Newsham claimed to have direct knowledge of one instance when the N.S.A. intercepted a senator's telephone call. Newsham, who will not publicly discuss what she told Stokes because the information is classified, recalls that Stokes assured her his committee would investigate her claims.

Soon after the meeting, two committee aides met with a military contractor employee who Newsham said had information on N.S.A. spying on U.S. citizens. This source confirmed her account, say Newsham and Dina Rasor, the director of the Project on Military Procurement, who introduced Newsham to Stokes. But Michael O'Neil, one of the committee staff members at the meeting, denies any substantiation was provided.

Newsham maintains that the House committee did not examine her charges seriously. She claims that committee aides told the other source (whom neither she nor Rasor will identify) to "let sleeping dogs lie," and that the person's job has since been downgraded, with access to classified information sharply curtailed. "We made our own efforts to look into this, but beyond a certain point we were not able to go any further," O'Neil says. The committee merely advised Newsham to take the matter up with the N.S.A. itself.

■ Bring Lawyers, Money and Money

In Washington, democracy doesn't come cheap. Last March, the nominal President of Panama, Eric Arturo Delvalle, failed to oust Gen. Manuel Noriega. Delvalle then turned to a blue-blooded corporate attorney, William Rogers. A partner in the Washington law firm of Arnold and Porter and a former State Department official (not to be confused with Nixon's Secretary of State), Rogers began what he grandly called a "revolution by litigation."

Rogers used a clever legal maneuver to give Delvalle, not Noriega, control of the assets Panama had in the United States, about $50 million. According to the Justice Department's Office of Foreign Agent Registration, Arnold and Porter received $450,517 in fees for its first ten weeks of work for Delvalle's shadow government. Presumably, the money came from the Panamanian accounts that Rogers had won control of for Delvalle—which should be considered the property of the Panamanian people. Since Arnold and Porter continues to represent the Delvalle forces, its fees could by now be in the millions, making Rogers perhaps the highest paid "revolutionary" in Latin American history.

■ Hero of the 1970s

Our contribution to the current 1970s craze (certified by periodicals ranging from *Business Week* to *The Village Voice*) is to salute a worthy but forgotten figure of that decade, Fred Harris.

Harris is an apostate from the respectable center. Elected as a conservative Democrat to the Senate in 1966, he was almost picked to be Hubert Humphrey's running mate. After 1968, Harris moved steadily to the left under the influence of the antiwar movement and the counterculture. He headed the rules committee that opened up the Democratic Party's presidential nominating process, and then played a leading role on the Kerner commission, which foresaw America's current racial predicament. He gave up his seat in Oklahoma in 1972 and ran a conventional campaign for the presidential nomination. ("No More Bullshit" was his frank, if ill-advised, slogan.) In 1976 he ran again, this time without regard for what fund-raisers and pundits said. Riding around the country in a Winnebago, he conducted a progressive populist campaign that was the forerunner of Jesse Jackson's campaigns.

Recall that at the end of 1975, George Wallace was the front-runner for the Democratic nomination. Harris and Jimmy Carter were unknowns competing for the white blue-collar vote. Harris never resorted to racial appeals, and boldly quoted Jackson to pro-Wallace audiences. He also offered an economic platform that called for "getting the rich off welfare" via tax reform and deregulation of uncompetitive industries. He lost quickly but honorably.

Left-wing populism failed to catch on in the 1970s, but Harris's contribution to the revitalized left wing of the Democratic Party today is clear. His media director, Frank Greer, went on to form a political consulting firm that was instrumental in the 1986 elections of three long-shot populist Democratic Senators (Wyche Fowler, Kent Conrad, Brock Adams). Harris's campaign manager was Jim Hightower, the great white hope of American populism. Harris now teaches political science at the University of New Mexico.

■ The K.G. Effect

How will the Bush Administration prove its K.G. ("kinder, gentler") effect on the nation? Perhaps by using President Reagan's last budget as a yardstick. Compared with Reagan's draconian fantasies, Bush's first domestic spending proposals will seem positively Scandinavian. A better measure, though, notes the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, should be Bush's own campaign promises.

Three areas to watch in the coming budget battle: Reagan's final budget cuts Medicaid by $1.66 billion; Bush said during the campaign that he hoped to expand Medicaid to cover more low-income children. Reagan proposes freezing Head Start spending; Bush said he wanted the Head Start program, which now reaches less than 20 percent of eligible poor children, to cover every 4-year-old in the country. Reagan envisions spending less than half the $683 million authorized by the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act; Bush pledged to "fully fund" the McKinney Act programs.

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ARTICLES.

THE C.I.A. EXPLOSIVE

Did It Blow Up Flight 103?

DAVID CORN

When E. Lawrence Barcella Jr. heard about the explosion of Pan American Flight 103,* he immediately thought of Edwin Wilson, the Central Intelligence Agency's infamous renegade. In particular, Barcella, the former Assistant U.S. Attorney who tracked down Wilson and put him behind bars, pondered the 40,000 pounds of C-4 plastic explosive that Wilson, well schooled by the agency in intrigue and arms dealing, sold to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi in 1977. "That was the largest illegal shipment of U.S.-manufactured plastic explosives ever," Barcella recalls. And, unless someone has outdone Wilson and kept it quiet, that remains the largest black market source of the deadly, long-lasting, easily concealed material.

A week after the Boeing 747 aircraft exploded and fell to the Scottish countryside around Lockerbie, British investigators announced that a plastic explosive had caused the blast. There are two principal types: C-4, made in the United States, and Semtex, which is manufactured in Soviet bloc countries. By studying residue on parts of the wreckage, demolition experts can determine which of those it was, or if some other, less common plastic explosive ripped apart the aircraft.

There is, however, no way of tracing a particular batch of C-4. A few years ago, there was a proposal that manufacturers be required to mark C-4 with identifying chemical traces, but the idea was never adopted. Still, if the wreckage of the Pan Am jet tests positive for C-4, a strong possibility will exist that Flight 103 is part of the Wilson legacy, a painful reminder of the C.I.A.'s inability to control a dangerous former agent.

Wilson joined the C.I.A. in 1955. During his sixteen years of service, his assignments ran the gamut of spycraft. He worked on security for the U-2 program, guarded a K.G.B. defector, ran wiretaps, penetrated the U.S. labor movement and Hubert Humphrey's 1964 vice-presidential campaign, and paid off Corsican mobsters who kept Communist dockworkers in check. He reached Shangri-La when the agency assigned him to Special Operations. There he set up a string of C.I.A. "proprietaries," which shipped secret cargoes for the agency, including supplies of weapons. Running these companies undercover as an independent businessman, he was able to earn thousands of dollars beyond his government pay.

In 1971, however, the C.I.A. conducted a cost-control review and killed a number of overly independent proprietaries, including Wilson's group. He then left the agency and jumped to Task Force 157, a top-secret Navy operation, where he again managed undercover enterprises. In 1976, after his freewheeling ways became too noticeable, the Navy shut down Task Force 157. But Wilson had plenty of profitable skills to peddle on his own and soon found a client with deep pockets and a keen appreciation for his unique talents: Qaddafi. Wilson became a full-service center for the Libyan leader, providing him with bomb detonators, explosives and instructors—all for thousands in cash.

Wilson's new customer also wanted C-4, the explosive of choice for military and paramilitary operatives. It is highly malleable and difficult to detect. It will not detonate when struck by a bullet, unlike dynamite. It is widely used in conventional weaponry and occasionally in commercial demolition work. Kept under the right conditions, it maintains its charge for up to twenty years. According to Barcella, a large portion of the C-4 Wilson sold to Qaddafi was improperly stored and it degraded, but a substantial amount was distributed by Qaddafi to others with violent intent.

Barcella, now an attorney in private practice, fears that some of this C-4 may have reached the hands of those responsible for destroying Flight 103. He is waiting to see if British and U.S. investigators announce what brand of plastic explosive was detonated, once the chemical analysis is completed. If C-4 was used, the Wilson specter would be raised; if Semtex, then the Soviet Union would be embarrassed and détente muddied.

There is a precedent for official silence on this question, according to Peter Maas, who chronicled Wilson's exploits in his book *Manhunt*. On April 2, 1986, nine days after U.S. and Libyan jets clashed over the Gulf of Sidra, four people

DRAWINGS BY GUTO LINS

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were killed and nine injured when a bomb detonated on a Trans World Airlines flight approaching Athens. A Palestinian group, the Arab Revolutionary Cells, claimed credit for the action. Subsequent news reports cited an F.B.I. finding that the bomb had been made up of about one pound of plastic explosives, but what kind was not specified. Maas says that after he finished his book agents of the F.B.I. and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms told him privately it was C-4.

If C-4 did down Flight 103 and Wilson was the original supplier, it may not be the only instance of a U.S. intelligence operative abetting a major air disaster. In little-noticed testimony before a Senate subcommittee last summer, Franklin Joseph Camper, who ran a private school for mercenaries in Alabama, tied the 1985 crash of an Air India jetliner to a member of his staff and graduates of his academy—and to C-4. Camper, whose business trained Americans and foreigners in assassination and bombing techniques, including the use of plastic explosives, was an informant and sometime operative for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the F.B.I. and Army Intelligence. These agencies, he said, used his school for recruiting foreign agents and for collecting information on foreign mercenary and intelligence operations.

In November 1984, Camper testified, four Sikh nationalists who had enrolled in his school asked him to assist in their guerrilla war against India. Camper's F.B.I. control told him to stick close to the Sikhs. He did, and in May 1985 the F.B.I. rounded up five Sikhs for plotting to murder Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and another high-ranking Indian official.

But some members of the conspiracy, Camper noted, slipped the F.B.I. noose and escaped into Canada with a cache of C-4. Camper testified that these Sikhs had obtained the C-4 from one of his instructors, who had somehow acquired it from a licensed commercial user. On June 23, 1985, several weeks after the escape, an Air India Boeing 747, flying from Toronto to Bombay, blew up over the Atlantic Ocean, killing everyone aboard. After the crash, Sikh groups claimed responsibility for the bombing. In what appeared to be a related event, on the day of the crash a second bomb exploded in Tokyo's Narita International Airport.

Tom Moore, a special agent in the Birmingham, Alabama, F.B.I. office, verifies that Camper was involved in the Bureau's probe of the Sikhs but will not comment on the specifics of the episode, especially the possibility that the Sikhs had obtained plastic explosives via Camper's program and used it in the bombings. "Let's just say there was a less-than-ideal conclusion" to the affair, Moore says. Camper, who is serving time for his involvement in a car-bombing, believes the C-4 the Sikhs procured from his instructor blew the Air India 747 out of the sky. He also told the Senate subcommittee that Japanese forensic experts notified the F.B.I. that they had found C-4 residue in the wreckage at Narita, and that they had identified one fingerprint on the booby-trapped luggage as belonging to one of the Sikhs who had fled to Canada. "There were 329 people who died on that airplane, and they died because of a failure in our operation," Camper said. If he's right, it's not just because the F.B.I. failed to collar everyone involved but also because some Federal agencies encouraged Camper's entrepreneurial endeavor.

Edwin Wilson is serving three sentences totaling fifty-seven years in Federal prison, but his C-4 is still at large. By breeding agents like Wilson and sanctioning—even if only informally—operations like Camper's, U.S. intelligence and Federal law enforcement agencies aid the netherworld of spooks, extremists and mercenaries. In playing this shadowy game, they perhaps pick up some useful information once in a while. But in these cases, at least, they may have done so only at the cost of downed airliners and scattered bodies. □

THE LEGACY OF LYDDA

Four Decades of Blood Vengeance

AMOS KENAN

George Habash is now head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, but in 1948 he was just a young man who had recently completed his medical studies in Beirut. I was a platoon commander of the 82d Regiment of the Israeli Army brigade that conquered the Palestinian town of Lydda. Actually, we never really *conquered* Lydda. Lydda, to put it simply, fled.

I have no idea when or how, in the midst of that terrible war, George Habash managed to get through to visit his sister in Lydda. She was 30 years old, married and had six children. And she was ill. As a doctor, George—I allow myself to call him that—immediately diagnosed her disease and prescribed certain medicines. But Lydda was under curfew and there were no pharmacies, and it was not possible to leave the house and order an urgent delivery of medicine.

Dov Lifschitz, who today owns a clothing factory in Canada, was issued a Czech rifle back then that was stopped up with a cork and smeared with grease. He had arrived from Poland immediately after the world war and was then almost 18. Dov took apart the rifle and spent an entire afternoon cleaning the grease from the barrel, though there wasn't anyone around to tell him that this was the thing to do. Others like him were killed that summer near Latrun without managing ever to get the cork out of the barrel. The Israeli Army suffered its worst defeat of the war at the battle for Latrun. Hundreds of soldiers were killed, including many new immigrants taken straight off the boat into battle.

Daniel Sverdlov, a former Red Army soldier who had an eagle with outstretched wings tattooed on his right arm,

Amos Kenan is a columnist for the Israeli daily Yediot Aharonot *and is working on a book based on this story. Translated from the Hebrew by Richard Flantz.*

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taught Dov Lifschitz how to handle his rifle. The next time I saw Daniel Sverdlov was less than two years ago. Of the splendor of his muscular body, of his candid and innocent face, not much was left. Only a withered tattooed eagle on a withered arm, glasses over his bright eyes, faded thinning hair in place of his blond mop.

Before we left camp, the company commander gave me a large jute bag filled with thirty hand grenades. Our entire platoon spread out in an orchard on the outskirts of Lydda, armed with our Czech rifles. My best friend, Yankele, and I, we didn't trust or believe anyone. We took the bag of grenades and went up on the roof of a packing shed in the orchard. If we're going to die with the Philistines, we said to each other, this is how we'll die. Twenty-eight of the thirty grenades we spaced at equal distances beside the rim of the packing shed roof. Each of us kept one grenade for ourselves. This is how, we said, we'll die with the Philistines, if after we've thrown the twenty-eight grenades the Philistines come up to the roof to kill us.

The Philistines didn't attack us, and the next morning we returned to the base, which was then called Tel Litvinsky, a British Army barracks a ten-minute drive from Tel Aviv. After some time, Capt. Moshe Dayan, then the company commander of the Nahalal contingent in the 89th Regiment, led a convoy of jeeps through the streets of Lydda. From the jeeps, soldiers fired indiscriminately in all directions. Here they smashed a windowpane, there they killed a chicken. To this day, no one has counted how many chickens, cows, donkeys, camels, sheep and goats were killed in the war.

Lydda had yet to be conquered, for two reasons: There was still no organized force to conquer it, and there was really no city to conquer. The whole place, except for George Habash and his sister and a few others, was empty.

I don't remember the exact date of the official conquest of Lydda. I only remember myself and Yankele on the roof of another packing shed, a tall one, in a huge orchard just outside the town. The regiment commander stood tall against the horizon and looked through his binoculars. What did he see? Two tanks of the Cromwell type, the only serious tanks we had then, commanded by the head of our only tank company, Dan Samuel, grandson of the first High Commissioner to Palestine, Sir Herbert Samuel. The tanks had been stolen for us by soldiers in the British Army. Behind these tanks, and at some distance, came some Hotchkisses, the seemingly tricycle-sized French tanks. Behind these, some halftracks.

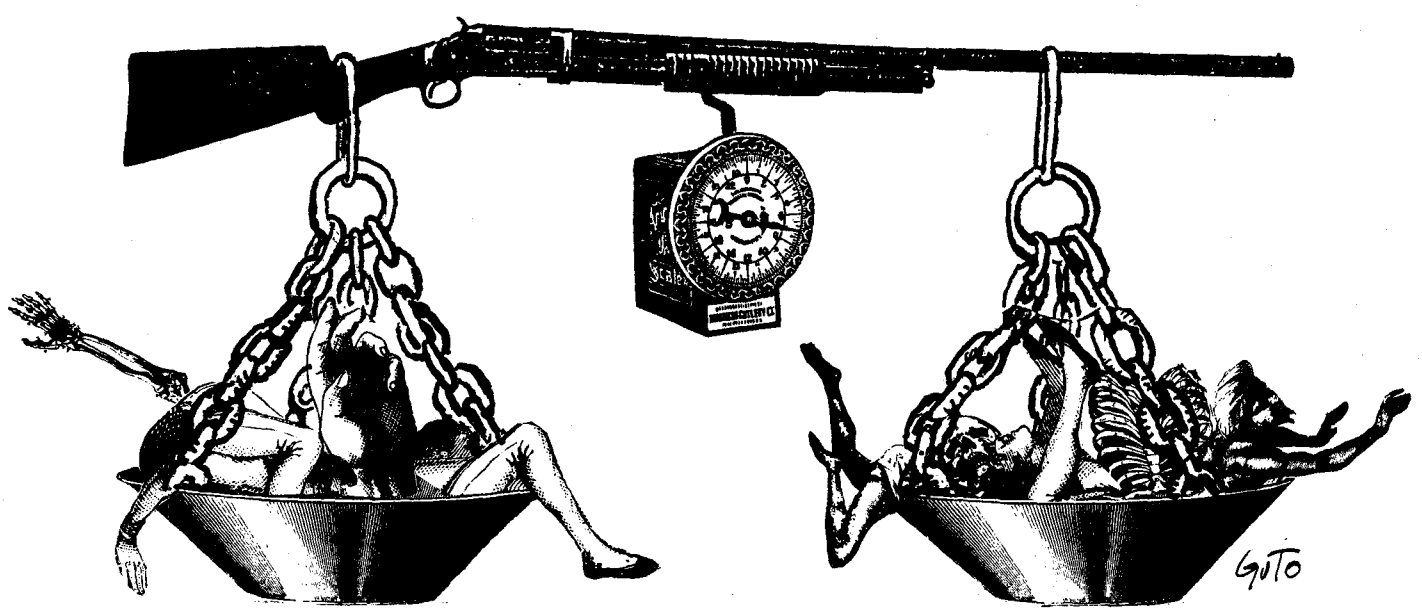
Only when the two Cromwells reached the nearby airfield did the entire brigade begin to bear down on Lydda. We found there what we found throughout that terrible war. Warm pita bread and the leftovers of meals eaten by soldiers of the Arab Legion of Transjordan, and an empty city on which a curfew was immediately imposed. Caught in the curfew were George Habash and his ailing sister.

After three days, and before Habash's eyes, his sister died. It was not possible to bury her, also because of the curfew. And so, in the yard of her house the young George, Dr. Habash, dug a grave with his own hands. In the yard of her house and with his own hands, he buried his sister.

After some time, the curfew was lifted and those who remained alive were transferred to temporary prison compounds. After yet more time, the prison compounds were opened and those who had been inside them, among them George Habash and his sister's six children, went on foot from Lydda to Amman, in Jordan, and from there and from then the story I am telling here really begins.

Our regiment was moved from Tel Litvinsky to the Lydda airfield, which is today Ben-Gurion International Airport, where there was another British barracks. We had a great time. After morning parade and breakfast, we would chew the fat until lunchtime. We would assign a duty officer, train a bit, assign a platoon to guard duty, rest a little, then gather again, leaning on the walls of thin asbestos, to gossip and reminisce. So young, so many reminiscences.

In the afternoon, those of us who couldn't take it any more would steal off to Tel Aviv for a few hours, on one excuse or another. At night, those of us who couldn't restrain ourselves would go into the prison compounds to fuck Arab women. I want very much to assume, and perhaps even can,



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that those who couldn't restrain themselves did what they thought the Arabs would have done to them had they won the war.

Once, only once, did an Arab woman—perhaps a distant relative of George Habash—dare complain. There was a court-martial. The complainant didn't even get to testify. The accused, who was sitting behind the judges, ran the back of his hand across his throat, as a signal to the woman. She understood. The rapist was not acquitted, he simply was not accused, because there was no one who would dare accuse him. Two years later, he was killed while plowing the fields of an Arab village, one no longer on the map because its inhabitants scattered and left it empty.

There is not, there has not been, and there never will be an exact blood vengeance. We will never know what eye was torn out for what eye; we will never know how many eyes have been torn out for how many eyes. What I do know with certainty is that there have been many who have sought and taken revenge. And to my mind, after forty years, it seems that all the vengeances have already come. Only compensation has not come.

Both you and I, George, have already taken vengeance—before and during and after the fact. And both you and I have not taken pity on man or woman, boy or girl, young or old. I know that there is not much difference between pressing a button in a fighter plane and firing point-blank into the head of a hostage. As there is no difference between a great massacre that was not meant to be and one that *was* meant to be. There is no distinction between justice and justice or between injustice and injustice, as there is no difference at all in what people—weak, transient beings, assured of the justice of their ways and their deeds—are capable of doing to people who are in sum exactly like themselves.

Tears filled my eyes, George, when I read for the first time in these forty years how your sister died. How you dug her a pit with your own hands in the yard of her house in the city of Lydda. I reach out with an unclean hand to your hand, which also is not clean. You and I should die a miserable natural death, a death of sinners who have not come to their punishment, a death from old age, disease, a death weak and unheroic, a death meant for human beings who have lived a life of iniquity.

And to me it seems that if you and I achieve such a miserable and unheroic death, only so may we atone for a life led as if it were not miserable, as if it *were* heroic. □

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GOVERNMENT BY TABLOID

No Gays, Please, We're British

MICHAEL H. HODGES

Something nasty is brewing in Britain. The government, beset by racial and economic tensions, has now turned its attention to homosexuals. At Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's instigation last spring, Parliament enacted Clause 28 of the Local Government Act, making it illegal for municipal councils to "intentionally promote homosexuality" or take steps that might imply that homosexual relationships amount to a "pretended family relationship." Councils that breach the statute, which took effect last May 23, can be sued by private citizens and removed from office.

Downing Street has tried to paint the clause as the brainchild of radical back-benchers, but it appears that the bill got preferential treatment. Citing anonymous senior government officials, *The Guardian* reported that Thatcher was the "driving force" behind the law. A more direct index of the Prime Minister's interest can be drawn from the extraordinary handling the clause got in the House of Lords, where the government sent out whips to drag in the "backwoodsmen"—the hereditary peers who rarely come to London, much less participate in parliamentary votes—from the far corners of the realm.

Upon passage, the fear was that the clause (officially Section 28 now that it is law) would permit a backdoor attack on gay and lesbian civil liberties. Many critics argued that the law's menace lies in its broad and imprecise language, and predictions circulated that gay bars, bookstores, theater groups—anything requiring some sort of municipal license—might fall victim to narrow legalism.

So far, the direst scenarios have not yet come to pass. No court cases, for example, have been brought against councils thought to be too solicitous of homosexuals. John Marshall, editor of London's *Gay Times*, insists that the bill's vagueness may grant councils a loophole, enabling them to document any number of reasons for a specific action rather than an intent to promote homosexuality. But others are not so sanguine, and the National Council for Civil Liberties notes that right-wingers may just be biding their time. If a court challenge should materialize, even an appeal to the top (the Law Lords) may be a dead end. Nicholas de Jongh, who

Michael H. Hodges writes frequently on social and political issues.

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has covered the Clause 28 story closely for *The Guardian*, pointed out that the sitting Lord Chief Justice called the 1967 decriminalization of private, consensual homosexuality "a bugger's license."

According to Chris Smith, Parliament's only avowed gay member, British judges may consult only the letter of the law and precedent, without taking parliamentary intent into account, a legal straitjacket that renders them far less flexible than their U.S. counterparts in interpreting law. With no written Constitution and no Bill of Rights for judges to fall back on, British law is what Parliament says it is. Smith admits that the whole affair has left him pining for a Bill of Rights.

Section 28's chief consequence has been to encourage hostility toward homosexuals. Columnist Bernard Levin wrote last spring in *The Times* of London, a paper not known for its sympathy toward gay and lesbian rights, that the mood resembles the lead-up to a "pogrom." Furthermore, the law has succeeded in cementing a climate of self-censorship that is, perforce, largely invisible.

A number of cases of active censorship have come to light. In the west of England last fall, a head teacher banned the performance of a historical play put on by the Avon Touring Company—a charitable dramatic troupe supported by the National Arts Council—because of a short scene that involved a homosexual. (Ironically, the teacher was exercising powers granted not by Section 28 but by the 1986 Education Act, which covers sex education, requiring it to uphold the values of "normal family life.")

The Labor Party–controlled Ealing Council in London recently pulled a cartoon depicting a pair of lesbians from a newsletter it publishes on women's issues, citing Clause 28. But the event that best suggests the clause's impact on the British political mood occurred last July at Manchester University Press, which abruptly canceled the latest volume in its successful Cultural Politics series. The book was to have addressed gay culture.

Representatives of the press say the book was dropped on academic grounds, but according to Duncan Campbell, writing in *The New Statesman and Society*, Francis Brooke, the chief executive officer of Manchester University Press, told the book's editors in a telephone conversation that the press must be careful not to become a "hostage to fortune" in the current political climate. A book on gay culture, Brooke went on, might attract "exactly the sort of response none of us wants" from the government and the tabloid press. In a postscript, the chair of the review committee that killed the book, Professor Brian Cox, was subsequently appointed by Thatcher to head a blue-ribbon commission on secondary education.

That Brooke felt compelled to cite the tabloids is a significant reflection of their growing power to intimidate and harass. Reaching well over 10 million readers daily, the clout wielded by the low end of Fleet Street in setting the national agenda may be the great untold story behind Clause 28. The tabloids are obsessed with homosexuality. Whenever possible, stories linking gays to child seduction, murder and AIDS are standard features, run under shrill headlines about "loony lezzies," "queers" and "kerb-crawlers."

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This behavior has generated little official opposition. The Press Council, an independent watchdog agency, ruled last April that "poof" and "poofter" are acceptable journalistic synonyms for male homosexuals. According to its director, Kenneth Morgan, the council, which recently deplored the use of "Paki" as a description for South Asians, based its decision on the ground that the above terms are "in tolerably common usage."

The Conservatives were quick to seize on the electoral advantages of fag-bashing. In the 1987 election, Tory posters featured books on homosexuality with captions suggesting that these were Labor's "idea of a comprehensive education." Similarly, a Conservative Party television spot last spring promoted a revision of the tax code, saying it would give constituents greater control over the spending habits of their local councils. All the while, a hand poured tea out into dozens of little white teacups, each labeled with an object of local tax revenues. While the voiceover urged viewer support, the camera zoomed in on the teacup that occupied center stage—the one labeled "GAY SEMINAR."

Americans will note the resemblance of Clause 28 to the Helms amendment, the nuisance rider attached two years running to the Federal AIDS funding bill; but despite similar language, the two are very different. Senator Jesse Helms drew heavy media coverage for waving a rather graphic but effective safe-sex comic book put out by the Gay Men's Health Crisis while gasping, "This makes me want to throw up!"

Both bills are neutral enough in wording, but they diverge sharply in their probable impact. The Helms amendment, which prohibits use of U.S. funds for educational materials that "condone or promote" homosexuality, amounts to harassment complicating the fight against AIDS. But it possesses neither the scope nor force to threaten civil rights.

Clause 28 does. But its sponsors brush off these concerns. The whole point, they remind interviewers, is to protect children. The legislation was born after Conservatives accused a handful of Labor-dominated councils of insinuating homosexuality into the classroom. Labor's principal weapon was alleged to have been *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin*, a picture-book imported from Denmark about a child raised by her gay father and his lover. Less daring than any "Francesca" episode on the Fox network's *Tracey Ullman Show*, the book nevertheless prompted a full-blown fracas.

Thatcher's forces never managed to produce any hard evidence that Britain's little ones were at all at risk. The thankless job of assembling what little there was fell to the bill's sponsor, Dame Jill Knight. Conservatives were able to adduce that plans were under way in a couple of localities to introduce "positive images" of lesbians and gay men into the classroom, similar to earlier campaigns regarding racial minorities. But on the central issue of whether *Jenny Lives* was routinely assigned to young children, Dame Jill was unconvincing. Phantom documents played a key role in her disquisition—never quite at hand, in her other purse, back

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in her office in the files. When pressed, the government mustered the following: *Jenny Lives With Eric and Martin* cropped up in one teacher resource library, inaccessible to children, and was checked out once by a lone teacher. So far as is known, until the Conservatives locked onto the issue, no British child had ever heard of the book.

Representatives of Britain's "quality" press gave Dame Jill a hard time, and she now responds to reporters like quarry before the gun. "I no longer speak on this thing," she told me, "for every time I have, there has been a great deal of harassment." She paused, and went on. "These are not rational people. The whole point was to protect children. But these people," giving the phrase a twist, "have chosen to ignore this and focus instead on nonsense like whether Oscar Wilde will have to be banned from the libraries."

David Wilshire, the bill's other sponsor in Parliament, denied that Thatcher was encouraging "government by tabloid press." Yet critics point out that the government displayed no interest in a similar bill that surfaced a year earlier in the House of Lords, and only appeared to seize on this version once *The Sun*, *The Star* and the rest had begun beating the homosexuals-in-the-schools drum.

"The tabloids are, after all, weathervanes of public feelings," said Wilshire genially. "Even if they do stir prejudices," he said, choosing his words slowly, "prejudices are very real."

Claims by sponsors and some government ministers that they intend no discrimination against homosexuals are belied by the tone of last year's parliamentary debate. Lord Beloff justified his vote by alleging that homosexuality—pink triangles and concentration camps notwithstanding—played a critical role in the early Nazi movement. And Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman applauded an arson attack on the newspaper *Capital Gay*, snapping, "There *should* be intolerance of evil." No Conservative rose to take issue.

In fact, even Labor was slow in coming to the defense of homosexuals when the clause first surfaced, despite the endorsement Labor Party conferences have given to gay and lesbian civil rights. On the first reading in the House of Commons, Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock rose to say that the party did not oppose the bill. The party soon reversed itself, and subsequent statements by its leaders have attacked the clause, with Kinnock himself denouncing "this pink triangle" bill. But this is not the first time Labor has tried to tiptoe away from homosexuals. Prior to the 1987 election, a letter written by Kinnock's press secretary, Patricia Hewitt, was leaked. It warned that the party's association with gay rights was "costing us dear amongst the pensioners."

Any effort to understand the environment that produced Clause 28 must contend with the looming presence, over the past two years, of the AIDS epidemic. This may strike Americans as quaint: With fewer than 2,000 cases of AIDS, the United Kingdom hardly has a runaway epidemic by U.S. standards. But according to Smith, it was only after the scandal sheet press seized upon AIDS that Thatcher recog-

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nized a ripe political opportunity to discredit the Labor Party.

Chris Smith refers to Thatcher's current term, her third, as "government off the leash." She has used it to ram radical—some would say revolutionary—measures through Parliament that include savage cuts in the Social Security system, an ill-starred effort to dismantle the National Health Service and, most punishing, the junking of the property tax in favor of a uniform, per capita poll tax. With all this unpopular legislation, Laborites complain sourly, the Prime Minister needed a whopping good distraction.

Enter Labor. Where, in the age of large Conservative majorities, does the main opposition party still flex its muscle? In the local councils. Thatcher has long conducted a vendetta against the councils, which have sometimes acted as the only effective check on her power, and she succeeded in 1986 in abolishing the Greater London Council. The tabloids have been eager handmaidens and, trumpeting the brilliantly diminishing phrase "the loony left," have seized upon revenue grants made by Labor councils throughout Britain, subjecting them to withering scrutiny.

A tiny handful of these grants went to gay and lesbian concerns, like the London borough of Haringey's "positive image" campaign. From Thatcher's point of view, the opportunity must have looked irresistible. The newspapers had laid hold of a juicy, theatrical subject that allowed Thatcher to link homosexuals to "the loony left" (Labor), disease (AIDS), child seduction ("positive images") and irresponsible council spending (£172,000 for a gay community center in Manchester). In the process, she could divert public attention from her attack on the national social "safety net" and emerge as the champion of prudent spending and family values.

There has been resistance to Section 28. The day before it became law, Sue Lawley, stolid co-anchor of the BBC evening news, appeared on camera looking pinched and strained. "We have," she announced to millions without explanation, "rather been invaded." In confirmation, her words were followed by a sequence of squeaks and bleats, all most unlike the staid BBC. There followed a quick cut to a long story on the nurses' strike.

The four lesbians who invaded the BBC—"Auntie Beeb" to the British—manacled themselves to desks and cameras before being wrestled to the ground and gagged by all free hands on set, including co-anchor Nick Witchell. These were the same young women who, in the middle of the House of Lords debate on the clause, rappelled from the visitors' gallery high above their lordships, shouting to terrified policemen, "It's all right! We won't hurt you!" The same women also chained themselves to the gates of Buckingham Palace; on each occasion they gave police only the names of prominent lesbians past, and were released shortly after their arrest. *The Star* reported after the BBC episode on the "gaggle of screeching, lesbian harridans, hirsute harpies, loony lezzies, and dotty dykes."

As an isolated phenomenon, Section 28 stands as a clear retreat on civil rights, but one that is not, unfortunately, inconsistent with the standards of most Western democracies. But taken in the context of Thatcher's other assaults on British freedoms, and her efforts to centralize power in London, it acquires the weave of a larger, more dismaying pattern. As Lord Soper warned his colleagues gloomily during the Lords' debate on the clause, there's "a smell of fascism in the air." □

'I DO NOT CHOOSE TO RUN'

Raising Issues, Hope and Hell

Jim Hightower, the Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, has emerged as a national leader of the loose alliance of populist and progressive forces—based in cities, suburbs and farmlands—that became a critical component of Democratic Party politics during the campaigns of 1988. In some ways he is a white, rural political analogue to Jesse Jackson: Both men seek to organize the same broad base, according to similar principles, for a common agenda. The two, of course, have quite different core constituencies, which must be merged for the success of the alliance. Last March, with Jackson by his side on the floor of the Texas Senate, Hightower became the first—and only—white elected state official in the country to endorse Jackson's candidacy for President.

For two years, Hightower has been gearing up for a run against conservative Republican Senator Phil Gramm, whose first term ends next year. But on January 5, in a reversal that startled Texans and populist activists around the nation, Hightower announced a change in plans. His reasons, and his analysis of the political process, are valuable and compelling beyond their specific regional significance. —*The Editors*

JIM HIGHTOWER

While I was growing up in Denison, Texas, our Congressman was the old populist Democrat Sam Rayburn. Mr. Sam once said something that has stuck with me: "Every now and then a politician ought to do something just because it's right."

I promise not to make a habit of it, but I have recently made a personal political choice just because I think it is the right thing to do. It might not prove best for my political career—who knows? But it fits me comfortably, and I think it is the right decision in light of the larger values and goals that brought me into politics in the first place. My life's work—from my service as an aide to Ralph Yarborough in the U.S. Senate to my editorship of *The Texas Observer*, from the speeches that I give to the initiatives I make as Texas Commissioner of Agriculture—has been to be an advocate of populist principles and to try to make both political and economic democracy a possibility for the many. As I looked toward the 1990 elections, the dilemma that I faced was how I could best remain true to this long-term political effort. My decision was to run for re-election as Agriculture

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Commissioner and to apply my political energies toward building a Texaswide populist Democratic alliance.

The natural step for me, however, seemed to be to take on Phil Gramm in the Senate race. My supporters assumed that I would, I assumed it, and so did Gramm. It is the kind of good/evil, handsome/ugly fight that gets my juices flowing, and while I would have started as an underdog candidate challenging an incumbent Senator, I had a fair shot at winning. Polls show that my name identification and voter approval rating put me in his league. He can raise $15 million or more, but Democratic contributors all across the country were eager enough about the match that I was in danger of raising $8 million to $10 million myself. It looked as though I could avoid a costly primary fight, and Democratic activists were wildly enthusiastic about my effort. Press coverage would have been bigger than at a Super Bowl. I think I know how to run a campaign that would have driven Gramm crazy (admittedly a short ride for Phil). And, most important, despite the conventional wisdom, Gramm is vulnerable because his record is a product of his right-wing ideology rather than of common sense and the needs of Texans. The people of our state will be less than charmed to learn that Gramm has:

§ voted against legislation to provide catastrophic health insurance for aging Americans;

§ led the fight against giving American workers sixty days' notice before their plant is closed and they are put out of work;

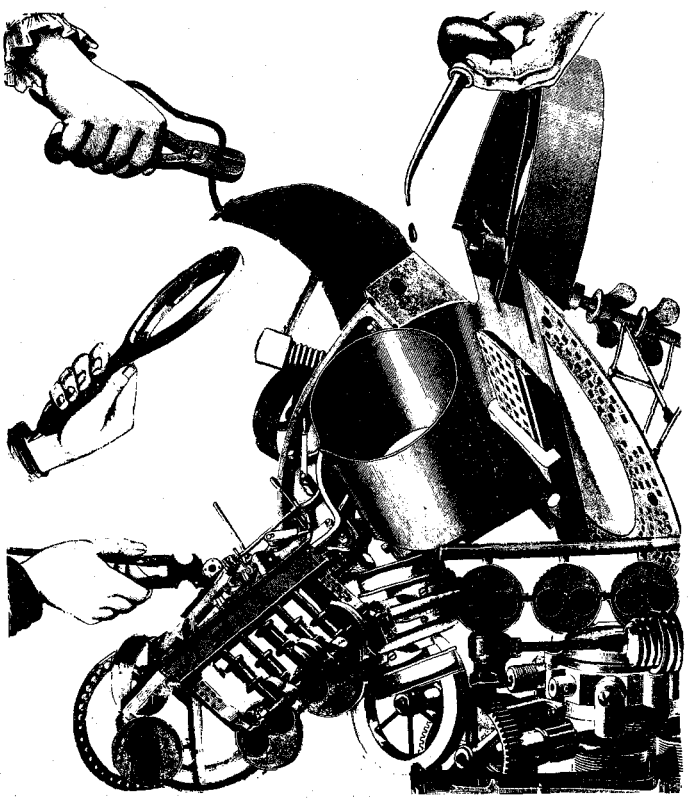
§ fought the extension of unemployment benefits and retraining programs to laid-off workers in the oil and gas industry;

§ opposed the Clean Water Act;

§ led the fight against emergency shelter and food assistance for homeless families;

§ consistently voted against funding for shelters to harbor victims of domestic violence;

§ voted against the 1988 Hunger Prevention Act.



So why not run? My heart told me to go for it, and I almost did. Down the road beyond 1990, I may yet. But for now, I think I can have more impact on the future of Texas by joining with others to launch a concerted effort to change the way politics is conducted. While a run against Gramm might put me in the Senate, and while it would be good fun for me, campaigns are necessarily egocentric, leaving little behind in the way of a cohesive base that could elect not just me but others, ultimately to form a populist majority and produce populist politics. And while I might be able to gather as much as $10 million, I would have to spend more time in the living rooms of the wealthy raising money than I could out in the communities raising issues, raising hopes and raising hell.

It is precisely this kind of high-dollar, high-tech politics that is generating a debilitating cynicism in our democracy. In last fall's deplorable presidential election, not even half of those eligible chose to vote. Two-thirds of those who did vote said they wished there was another choice, and half the voters for each candidate said they were voting *against* the other guy. When half the people don't vote and half of those who do are voting cynically, our democracy is diluted and gravely weakened. National officeholders regularly are elected by only 15 to 25 percent of the people, and governmental policies subsequently reflect the viewpoints of the narrow elite. As long as politics and government fail to address the real needs and aspirations of more than half the people, voter apathy and disaffection will continue to spread, and America is the worse for it. The "no vote" majority is sending a profound political message: "There has to be a better way; it is time to try something different."

I have been accused of hearing voices that aren't there, but as I confer with Democratic political operatives and officeholders in Texas and elsewhere, I find that I am not alone in hearing this message of disquieting silence. Because of this, my political choice became clear: I could spend the next two years of my life, millions of dollars and the political energy of thousands of Texans to try to get myself elected to the Senate; or I could put my political capital into the more fundamental task of plowing the ground, scattering the seeds and nurturing the growth of a broad-based, grass-roots populist politics out of which a progressive government can arise. There comes a time in politics when it is more productive to plow back into the enterprise than to take from it, and this is such a time.

There is no magic to the formation of a populist Democratic alliance. The tools for shaping a compelling political message, for communicating vision and values, for putting an agenda forward for political debate, for recruiting and financing candidates and for the other essential tasks of building a winning political movement are more technologically sophisticated today, but they are fundamentally the same as in the past. Speakers' bureaus, small-donor solicitation programs, policy development centers, campaign

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training and other essentials are the same ingredients for our success that they were for old-time populists or even for the manipulative politics of the national Republican Party.

We do not need "secret weapons" but focus and determination. As the last good Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, said about 120 years ago, "Good things might come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle." Instead of hustling and doing the necessary groundwork, Democrats generally and progressives specifically have spent far too much time waiting on the occasional "good" candidate to ride in and save the day. We need a deliberate politics that builds day in and day out, generating its own candidates from the ground up.

I realize that this will seem a fanciful notion to many hardened politicos and reporters. I'm sounding the cry of a battle much tougher than the one I'm turning down. Running one campaign for the Senate is comparatively easy for everyone to understand. We all know what to do—the press knows what to look for, contributors know their role, activists know how to run a get-out-the-vote program, pollsters and media buyers know their place, and the enterprise runs a prescribed course. But organizing a populist alliance with a common purpose requires a different vocabulary and a commitment to the yeoman's service of producing broad-based citizen participation.

This arduous, uncertain task is less well defined, but it is one that must be undertaken seriously if we are ever to change the focus of politics back from TV spots to political organizing, from money to people, from sound bites to ideas. One thing I know is that Americans are ready for a different approach if we are ready to try it. And the whole point of populism is to trust the good instincts of the people.

Such trust is not a matter of ideological naïveté, nor of liberalism versus conservatism, but of the fundamental sensible assumption upon which our democracy is founded: The more people who participate, the more creativity, progress and general happiness our society gets back. Such participation does not flow inevitably—it requires constant work to remove the myriad obstacles that dam up participation. Clearing the flow is the constant struggle that must be undertaken by government, political parties, citizen activists, politicians and political alliances.

For the past six years, the staff of the Texas Department of Agriculture has put this concept into practice throughout the state. The staff is out in the field working shoulder to shoulder with local communities to protect the environment and health of people associated with agriculture. We are challenging ourselves and the state's farmers to build a diversified, consumer-oriented, sustainable agriculture. We have tapped the aspirations of everyday people, removing barriers to their economic endeavors and freeing their enterprise for the benefit of Texas. With the support of the legislature and the help of other agricultural institutions, we have offered the simple tools of self-help to build food processing facilities, to sell everything from grain sorghum to honey in the international market, to open up the $3 billion-a-year organic foods market to Texas producers, to assure safer pesticide practices, to protect communities from toxic

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waste contamination—in general, to give people the means to get hold of their own destiny.

All of this effort has been "unconventional" in terms of what was considered proper and possible, and much of it has been done with small farmers, workers, minorities, low-income people and others who were considered noncommercial. Consider the Valley Farmers Cooperative in San Juan. It was started in 1986 by a group of low-income Mexican-Americans, many of whom had been farm workers. As separate, small producers of vegetables, they were under a contract-farming system controlled by powerful packing sheds. After months of production, they could end up with no profit or even owe money to the packer. However, with a little organizing assistance, market information and a small revolving loan, they formed a cooperative that allows them to bypass the packers and sell directly to supermarkets and food processors throughout the country. Their income has grown from $100,000 the first year to nearly $1 million last year. They have a labor agreement with the United Farm Workers Union and are paying higher wages than others in the valley. The point is, when government starts working for everyday people, they start believing again that they *are* the government.

The work of the Texas Department of Agriculture is evidence that an unconventional, populist approach can work in the real world. Indeed, it was a populist struggle at the turn of this century that led to the creation of an elected Commissioner of Agriculture so that exactly this kind of grass-roots innovation could take place. There is much more to be done, and I want to do it.

This same faith in the people must be made the core of our political initiatives. It is, after all, in the finest tradition of our Democratic Party, from Jefferson and Jackson to Kennedy and Johnson. The march of our nation's democratic history has been erratic, but it has moved steadily toward greater and greater inclusion in the political process. Democrats especially cannot now abandon that history and complacently settle for a nation governed by an "upscale" minority of citizens.

It is time to return to basics. The question is not whether the Democratic Party should go to the left or to the right but whether it will go again to people themselves. I believe that both our democratic and Democratic futures are dependent on our willingness to reach out directly to those in the non-voting majority and on our ability to deliver a message that speaks clearly to their real-life needs and aspirations. Then we must offer well-run campaigns that will rally their participation, and we must put their agenda on the table in Austin and in Washington.

It was Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the Democratic Party, who said: "I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion." Developing this state's populist base is the most productive political work available to us in the next few years, and I want to be a part of it. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Revolution

(*Continued From Front Cover*)
should have promoted the historian François Furet as the oracle for this year's ceremonies. His book *La Révolution* is a sort of funeral oration: Its subtitle might well be "And the Worthy as Well as Difficult Means of Bringing It to an End." His 1989 is the French Revolution as celebrated by the Thermidorians, the gravediggers of the Revolution who took over after the fall of Robespierre and his companions on July 27, 1794—the ninth of Thermidor.

Furet's commercial success is in a sense puzzling. His is not a moving description of the great upheaval, a lyrical narrative like that of Jules Michelet, which carries the reader along in spite of its errors and omissions. Furet's *Révolution* is really an essay, a commentary on French history from 1770 to 1880 that requires from the reader a fairly good knowledge of events. Such books do not as a rule do well. Furet's has been on the best-seller list for ten weeks now, and there are two possible explanations. One is that the French, like anyone else, buy their coffee-table books to look at, not to read, and Furet's *Révolution*, a most handsome book that costs a most handsome $70, is sumptuously illustrated. The other reason is that the media do in fact have real influence, and Furet provided just the message they were looking for.

Furet's main thesis is that the age of revolution is over. From the very start, his sympathies are with those, beginning with Mirabeau, who try to arrest the course of events. Yet it still takes ninety years in Furet's version for the revolutionary process to come to an end. It takes the massacre of the Communards in 1871, exorcising for a time the ghost of revolution, as well as a deal between their murderer, Adolphe Thiers, and moderate Republicans, for a Royalist assembly to proclaim the Third Republic and for July 14 to become France's national holiday—as it did in 1880. "The French Revolution," the author concludes, "had come into harbor." Or, to put it another way, the bourgeois Republic was firmly established at last (although to maintain his thesis of a completely finished process, Furet has to drop the adjective "bourgeois").

Some historians, influenced by rather primitive Marxism, may well have tended to analyze the Revolution in too crudely economic terms. Furet and his friends, however, are all-political. In his other contribution to the occasion, a critical dictionary of the Revolution coedited with Mona Ozouf, there is no entry for Robespierre's young companion Saint-Just (famed, *inter alia*, for his contention that "happiness is a new idea in Europe"). This is quite evidently a question of judgment and political bias. The absence of an entry for the "bourgeoisie," however, is a matter of fundamental conception. For Furet's version to stand, democracy as a concept must be stripped of any economic and social context. The purely political treatment of events in his *Révolution* is therefore not accidental. Toward the end of the book he cites Léon Gambetta as expressing "quite a different idea: not of a social conflict rooted in the economy, of which 1789 would be only the preface and that a new revolution must inevitably settle. But, on the contrary, of democracy as an irresistible force of integration on the march." Attributed to Gambetta, this is in fact the author's own credo.

But Furet himself seems hardly convinced that the revolutionary journey was over by 1880. The Paris Commune of 1870-71, despite its tragic ending, acts as a link between the sans-culottes of 1793 and the Bolsheviks of 1917. Throughout Europe it proved impossible to limit the idea of equality to a purely legal fiction. The bourgeois order, whether republican or monarchical, was threatened from within and from without by socialist subversion. Dropping any pretenses to the detachment of the historian, the prolific Furet has also joined with two companions in a book eloquently titled *La République du Centre*, in which he announces the second death of the French Revolution. In this version, it takes another century, the dissolution of Stalinist mythology, the exposure of the gulag, the collapse of the French Communist Party and the end of the great conflict over religious versus lay schools for France to join the European mainstream. Thank God, Furet sighs, it is no longer the odd one out among the "western democracies."

The French, probably more than any other people, tend to view the past through the prism of current confrontations. Attitudes to the Great Revolution once marked the dividing line between Republicans and Royalists, between left and right, though that line rapidly became blurred. After that, views on the Revolution became a litmus test for divisions within the left. Sympathy for Danton, for Robespierre or for the *enragés* was a fairly safe guide to a person's place on the political spectrum. In Stalin's time, a defense of Robespierre was quite often read as an indirect plea for the Moscow trials. Furet, himself a zealous practitioner of Stalinist history in his youth, subsequently attacked his former fellows for their political contortions. Yet he and his new companions are equally guilty of projecting their present prejudices onto the past.

As head of the Raymond Aron Institute and co-chair of the Saint-Simon Foundation, François Furet is a high priest of the cult of "Rocbar" or, if you prefer, "Baroc"—terms coined by coupling the name of Michel Rocard, the most moderate of French Social Democrats and the present Prime Minister, with that of Raymond Barre, a moderate Conservative and former Prime Minister. It is the French equivalent of Britain's Butskellism of the 1950s and 1960s, the middle-of-the-road philosophy identified with R.A. (Rab) Butler, the liberal Conservative, and Hugh Gaitskell, the right-wing Labor Party leader. Rocbar/Baroc, like Butskellism an expression of the golden mean, is quite naturally favored by the media.

In France, as far as the Revolution is concerned, the Rocbar crowd really did have to shift back to the center, having moved too far to the right at one stage. Influenced by the *nouveaux philosophes*, they had tried for a time to discredit the whole idea of revolution, attributing to it an innate tendency toward terror. They were quickly overtaken on this terrain by such truly rabid reactionaries as the group of historians around Pierre Chaunu, who exploited this breach to publicize books about, say, the revolutionary "genocide" in the Vendée. Furet and his friends then had to retreat. When he talks about his dictionary of the Revolution, for instance, Furet takes pains to note that the list of contributors, while containing no

Daniel Singer, The Nation*'s Europe correspondent, is the author of* Is Socialism Doomed? The Meaning of Mitterrand *(Oxford University Press).*

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Marxists, also excludes any "anti-moderns." Politically, too, Rocbar adherents would like to occupy the vast territory between the Communists and the National Front. But what is really striking is the extent to which these French thinkers, like their Anglo-Saxon counterparts who preach the "end of ideology," positively ooze their own brand of it. Read, for example, Michel Winock's rather lively *1789: Une Année Sans Pareil.* The author gives the game away in his concluding section when he argues that "the abolition of private property is but a preamble to the suppression of liberties." This is familiar stuff in the flimsiest of disguises, offered up by latter-day evangelists preaching the same old gospel of capitalism from here to eternity.

If the idea of revolution is unpopular for the time being—at least outside some parts of the Third World—this is due to more than just the clever tactics of its opponents and their servants. In 1917, when Russians demonstrated that workers could seize power, the revolutionary idea made a leap forward. But then, as the Revolution failed to spread westward, Marxism began to pay the price for its vagaries in a backward country for which it had not originally been designed, and for the continued identification of socialism with the crimes committed in its name. That price is being paid outside the West as well, as I was reminded last October in Barcelona at a conference attended by Soviet intellectuals. The well-known novelist Fazil Iskander spoke movingly, with a peasant's earthiness, of the rhythms of nature and the seasons and the terrible danger of artificially speeding the pace of events. Throughout the Soviet bloc, a vast proportion of the intelligentsia, once bitten and twice shy, is now fearful of taking shortcuts, of accelerating history—gun in hand—of vast upheavals and mass movements from below.

It is our duty, when the occasion arises, to remind them that revolutions are not just the handiwork of active minorities but the combined result of accumulated discontent and the inability of a system to offer solutions. To remind them, too, borrowing the words of Bertolt Brecht, about the violence not just of the current but of "the riverbanks that squeeze the current between them." Yet in the present Western context, the danger is not remotely of shortcuts or premature action. As higher productivity in the West produces great unemployment, revealing the contrast between our technological genius and the absurdity of our social and political organization, the image that springs to mind is not one of premature birth but of the monsters that result from an overextended, unending pregnancy.

"Pregnancy" leads to "midwife," which opens up a potentially dangerous metaphor: Marx's reference to revolutionary violence as the midwife of history has sometimes been taken too literally, reducing the historical process to its most spectacular outbursts. In practice, 1789 and 1917 were very different in nature. Whereas the French bourgeoisie gained its ascendancy within the feudal order, the Russian proletariat did nothing of the sort. Yet can one envisage a socialist revolution that would gain power at all levels before it seized power at the top—that is to say, winning cultural hegemony in the Gramscian sense as part of its conquest of power?

In any case, the historians who dismiss revolution as the curse of the Third World or merely a historical feature are not maintaining that the next social upheaval will inevitably be different from the storming of the Bastille or the seizure of the Winter Palace. They are really arguing that there will be no such upheaval at all. Clearly they are too clever, and too keen on their profession, to proclaim openly the end of history. Yet like all faithful servants of an established order, they treat that order as something fixed in perpetuity. By denying its class nature, by dismissing the possibility of radically altering property and other social relations, they allow for quantitative but not qualitative change. Precluding an alternative, they limit their own vision, and that of their readers, to the capitalist horizon.

Twenty years after 1968, with the ghost of revolution no longer haunting Europe, its leaders think they can afford to take certain risks. While I have put the accent on Furet and his friends, because they are fashionable and because that fashion is significant, they are not the only ones to be appearing in print this year. One should also mention the work of Michel Vovelle and his colleagues from the Institute of the History of the French Revolution, as well as the documents and the old classics that are being reissued for the occasion (see box, this page). Besides, the public is not forced to accept the tame messages or the bowdlerized versions of history being peddled by these quasi-official voices. The example of people trying to change their life by political action is by its very nature contagious, and the revival of revolutionary history—whatever the efforts of

REV READINGS

François Furet's *La Révolution, de Turgot à Jules Ferry 1770–1880* is published by Hachette; the *Dictionnaire Critique de la Révolution Française*, which he co-edited with Mona Ozouf, is published by Flammarion.

Michel Vovelle's latest, *La Révolution contre l'Eglise: De la Raison à l'Etre Suprême*, is published by Editions Complexe. He has also written a new preface to Jean-Paul Marat's *Les Chaînes de l'Esclavage* (same publisher). Another classic just reissued, by Armand Colin as a single-volume compilation, is Georges Lefebvre's *La Grande Peur de 1789* and *Les Foules Révolutionnaires.*

For those particularly interested in the debates over the rights of man there are two new books: Christine Faur's *Les Déclarations des Droits de l'Homme de 1789* (Payot) and de Bacque, Schmale and Vovelle's *L'An 1 des Droits de l'Homme* (Presses du C.N.R.S.).

The new biographies, significantly, do not deal with the radical heroes of the Revolution. There are three books on Condorcet, of which the best known is Elisabeth and Robert Badinter's *Condorcet: Un Intellectuel en Politique, 1743–1794* (Fayard). Also in print is a new biography of the author of the famous essay "What Is the Third Estate?" Jean-Denis Bredin's *Sieyès* (Editions de Fallois). For a good, easy read with lots of illustrations, try Georges Soria's three-volume *La Révolution Française* (Bordas).

Not surprisingly, books by Edmund Burke, Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël are being reissued. Most classics on the Revolution are available. Two years ago Editions Messidor completed a new edition of Jean Jaurès's *Histoire Socialiste de la Révolution Française. La Grande Révolution*, by Pierre-Alexandre Kropotkine, is hard to find, but Daniel Guérin's *La Lutte de Classes sous la Seconde République*, though not reissued, is still in print. —D.S.

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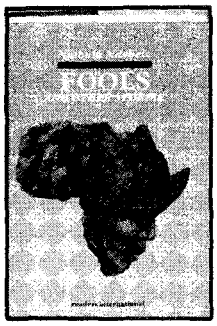

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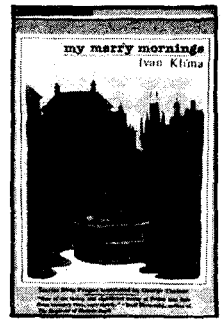

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its Thermidorian chroniclers—inevitably contains an element of subversion.

For instance, in the conclusion to his classic book *The French Revolution*, Georges Lefebvre stresses that, in addition to the bourgeois interpretation of the Revolution as a question of the equality of rights, it was open to two other interpretations—the Social Democratic and the Communist. Supposedly buried by Napoleon Bonaparte, both were revived in the nineteenth century and have remained vigorous. For friends and foes alike, Lefebvre wrote, "it is the Revolution of Equality and, as such, though the passing of time drags it slowly into the past, its name will not be silenced soon on the lips of men." In today's Europe, with its millions of unemployed, its welfare state threatened and inequality once again raised to the status of a new gospel, this message sounds more topical than ever.

Europe's deep freeze may be drawing to an end. The first cracks are already visible in Moscow and its dominions. Who knows when a new climate will take hold in Paris, London or Berlin? The champions of the established order—François and George, Maggie and Helmut—who will flock to the French capital in July for the farcical celebration of a revolutionary anniversary, as well as their prophets, employed to recite the funeral oration for the second and final death of the revolutionary spirit, would do well to pay attention. If they stand by the ornate column that now graces the vast square where the symbolic prison fortress of the Bastille once stood and listen carefully, they may hear the rising echo of Rosa Luxemburg's parting words: "You stupid lackeys, your order is built on sand. Tomorrow the Revolution will raise its head again and proclaim to your sorrow amid a brass of trumpets: I was, I am, I shall always be. . . ." □

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Tell It Like It Is

ROY ROSENZWEIG

THAT NOBLE DREAM: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession. *By Peter Novick. Cambridge University Press. 648 pp. $49.50. Paper $15.95.*

Some years ago, Harvard University historian Oscar Handlin recalled the "exhilaration" he felt in 1936 when he attended his first American Historical Association meeting. His colleagues, Handlin wrote in reverential tones, were "internally cohesive and held together by adherence to common standards and convictions," with a "sense of unifying purpose that overrode differences in background, interpretation and points of view." Handlin may have thought that rigorous professional standards overrode differences in background, but this was far from universally true in those days. In 1935, for example, his adviser, Arthur Schlesinger Sr., found it necessary to include in a letter of recommendation the reassurance that Handlin, a Jew, had "none of the offensive traits which some people associate with his race."

Schlesinger's letter was not exceptional. His colleague Roger Merriman recommended Daniel Boorstin in similar terms as "a Jew though not the kind to which one takes exception." Even non-Jewish historians with vaguely Jewish names required "protection." When Wallace Notestein was being considered for a post at Yale, Charles Hull of Cornell provided the helpful clarification that "his family are Presbyterians, very much so, except Wallace himself, who is a somewhat straying sheep."

Handlin's wistful evocation of the historians of the 1930s was later republished in a volume titled *Truth in History*. Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* is, in some respects, the historiographic and epistemological opposite of Handlin's book. Not only does Novick's exhumation of fifty-year-old letters of recommendation expose the anti-Semitic underside of Handlin's beloved profession; Novick's larger purpose is to argue that there is no such thing as "truth in history," that the quest for historical objectivity—the founding myth of the historical profession—is an "incoherent" and "dubious" goal.

Novick, then, has really written two books. The first is a detailed, witty and engaging social and intellectual history of the American historical profession from its founding in the late nineteenth century to the present. It rests on extensive research in the personal papers of more than fifty prominent historians (an ironic piece of revenge on historians who have been rummaging through other people's mail for centuries) and on an impressive mastery of the key historiographic debates of the past hundred years. Even people who expect a book about historians to be dull will find Novick's graceful style and skeptical tone a refreshing departure from the standard chronicles of the profession. "Most historians," Novick complains, "generally write about their colleagues the way Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., writes about the Kennedys."

Not surprisingly, historians, like the Kennedys, turn out to have their flaws, and anti-Semitism (or the tolerance of anti-Semitism) is hardly the only one. Novick does not hesitate to disclose the others—the pervasive racism of early twentieth-century historians, the embarrassing propagandistic writings of World War I–era historians, and the all-too-compliant embrace of cold war politics by post–World War II historians. Novick may be a debunker, but he is a fair and even generous one. He refuses, for example, to dismiss entirely Handlin's sunny version of the historical profession of the 1930s, even though his own evidence suggests that he would echo C. Vann Woodward's contemporary exclamation about his calling: "My God, is this what I have dedicated my life to?"

In any event, Novick's main purpose is not really to detail the failings of historians. The second and more important book within *That Noble Dream* is a meditation on the central epistemological problem of historians, the "objectivity question." By showing the professional, political, psychological and cultural pressures undergirding the epistemological stance of historians, Novick effectively intertwines his two stories, the philosophical and the professional. Novick, then, has combined a subject that historians

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love to talk about (other historians) with one that they assiduously avoid—the underlying philosophical assumptions that guide their work. It is that aversion that helps explain why so many historians still hold to the noble dream of objectivity when almost everyone else has given it up, and why it has taken so long for a book like this to be written.

Historians first embraced objectivity, Novick suggests, partially out of a misunderstanding. In the late nineteenth century, American historians who flocked to Germany to study did not always grasp what their mentor Leopold Von Ranke was saying. In America, the famous Rankean injunction to show the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen* was habitually rendered "as it really was" even though Ranke used the word *eigentlich* in its alternative nineteenth-century meaning of "essentially." Americans, thereby, turned Ranke into an empiricist—a surprise to his German contemporaries who thought of him as quite the opposite.

But there was more to the triumph of objectivity than this simple blunder. The efforts to establish history as a profession and to enshrine objectivity as the historian's approved posture reinforced each other. While professionalism provided the voice of authority and the standardized techniques that seemingly backed up objectivist claims, those same claims offered the basis of an apparently value-free reward system that an emerging profession needed. Moreover, the "extraordinary degree of ideological homogeneity" among turn-of-the-century historians made it appear self-evident that their writings must be "objective." Their "impartial" accounts of the American Revolution and the Civil War, for example, rested on their widely shared belief in the "objective truth" of scientific racism.

World War I disturbed this comfortable consensus as historians eagerly enlisted in the battle against the Hun. In one notorious incident, J. Franklin Jameson, managing editor of the *American Historical Review*, employed the historian's "scientific" documentary method to authenticate forged documents used by the U.S. government to "prove" that Lenin and Trotsky were German agents. The crude mobilization of history in the war effort led to disillusionment. If history could so readily become propaganda, was it really different from propaganda? This question was taken up quite eagerly in the interwar years as relativist currents from science, anthropology, jurisprudence, philosophy and journalism began to undermine the old objectivist faith. Although the relativist doctrine espoused most forcefully by Charles Beard and Carl Becker never won the day, it began to receive a respectful hearing.

During and after World War II, however, relativism fell afoul of "the campaign for ideological mobilization" against totalitarianism. The most prominent spokesperson of the relativists, Beard, had opposed U.S. involvement in the war and had denounced President Roosevelt for "lying" the nation into it. After the war, former A.H.A. president Beard was being jeered at its meetings, denounced by Lewis Mumford (a former protégé) as an "abetter of tyranny, sadism, and human defilement" and was written out of history itself. Handlin, a student of one of Beard's students, declared that Beard "had no students" and that his "influence upon subsequent scholarship was slight." Although Beard's isolationism had no logical connection to his relativism, historians condemned both as a package. At the same time, the confident and conservative years of the 1940s and 1950s fostered a "convergent, celebratory historiography, which in turn promoted confidence in the objectivity of the work produced." When pressed, historians might admit that social circumstances affected scholarship, but as one put it, "Their awareness of the problem, plus their critical methods, make possible a practicable objectivity."

During the mid-to-late 1960s, objectivism fell out of fashion along with "the mood of affirmation and consensus" that had sustained it during the height of the cold war. (When New Left historian Jesse Lemisch submitted a savage Rankean attack on the present-mindedness and partisanship of establishment scholars to the *Journal of American History*, an "impartial" referee told the editor: "I don't know how you can tell him that he simply cannot do this, and that he certainly cannot do it in the pages of the *Journal*. He probably believes that he can, which says something about how far he and his ilk are estranged from civilization.") The rise of black history and women's history as well as the resurgence of relativist (now "postmodern") intellectual currents in other disciplines further eroded the foundations of the objectivist posture, creating consternation among some historians about the future of the profession.

The historical profession can now claim its "hyperrelativists" and its "hyperob-

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THE BOOK
The book, which is based on the show, is an international bestseller. The Village Voice revealed that the U.S. State Department grew worried about its impact overseas and commissioned photographers to present the "other side" of America. Written in a personal tone it is now a popular classroom supplement in American schools. 800 photos, the bulk in color.

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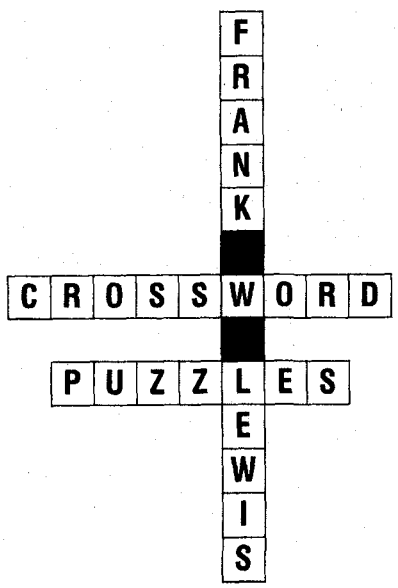

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jectivists," although the great majority of its members would probably rather change the subject. No doubt many of them will ignore Novick's larger epistemological argument and focus on whether he has gotten the sometimes unpleasant facts about his colleagues "right." Perhaps typical of such responses, I found that I was more skeptical of Novick's judgment whenever he addressed subjects—radical history, black history, women's history, public history—in which I have a professional or political stake. But these are arguments about small differences of interpretation and they only distract from the book's larger point—that the much-cherished notion of "truth in history" is itself a *historical* construction. □

'Journey Into Otherness'

EDWARD PETERS

A HISTORY OF PRIVATE LIFE, Vol. I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium. *General Editors, Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby. Edited by Paul Veyne. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Belknap/Harvard University Press. 670 pp. $29.50.*

A HISTORY OF PRIVATE LIFE, Vol. II: Revelations of the Medieval World. *General Editors, Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby. Edited by Georges Duby. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Belknap/Harvard University Press. 650 pp. $39.50.*

If it is true, as Dominick LaCapra says, that social history proposes to transform itself into "the mother hen of historiography in general," this is partly because the field has proved itself more open to new sources, methods and perspectives than has political and institutional history. At its best—as represented in these volumes—social history is able to account for more of the experience of more kinds of people in more of the past than political history. It has been hospitable to studies of gender, wealth and poverty, reading (and hearing) publics and even to politics itself. If its ambition has made for less coherence and consistency within the discipline and created difficulties with other types of history, it has also produced some wonderfully varied and exciting works, of interest to an audience broader than academics.

This ambitious project, *A History of Private Life* (three other volumes have not yet been translated into English), was inspired largely by Philippe Ariès, who long ago gently forced an awareness of the historicity of childhood and death upon the consciousness of his colleagues in the academy. Ariès once observed that, "to a civilization that specializes in diminishing differences, History must restore the lost awareness of particularities." As Paul Veyne echoes in his introduction to the first of these volumes, "History is a journey into otherness."

The "otherness" into which these volumes guide us has not always been made as clear as it is here. Both institutional and intellectual historians have often, in their affection for the "origins" of "Western Civilization," depicted a linear development from the Greeks to ourselves, tidily laid out in surveys. The great strength of these volumes and the project of which they are a part, from the wonderfully acerbic monograph by Veyne that opens Volume I to the study of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century intimacy by Philippe Braunstein that closes Volume II, is their sensitivity to particularity and difference.

This is the history of a new concept, private life, not the tired and randomly inconsistent history of "daily life," of which we have all read too many awful accounts. The authors all realize that the idea of private life is new, and none make excessively ambitious claims on its behalf; these studies are, in the classic French sense, *essais*, attempts at laying out a new field and a new perspective for investigation. They contain a number of varying definitions of private life, each of which reflects the experience of a different historian working with multiple kinds of sources. Duby's helpful introduction to Volume II expresses a very clear awareness of the problems raised by using terms coined only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as avenues to a remote and different past. Thanks to the authors' own self-awareness, the intelligent general reader at whom these volumes are aimed may proceed through them with considerably more confidence than might otherwise be the case.

One of the virtues of the concepts of private life used here is that they generate a tension or play between modern cat-

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egories of understanding and the otherness of the past. The editors entertain the distinction between private life—meaning not public, not open to the community and minimally subject to public authority—and the internal structures within which private life is lived. These include individuality, domestic arrangements (the studies insist on a changing definition of the family) and the marking off of the stages of the individual life, as well as the problem of subjectivity and the possible multiple realities of the interior and exterior lives.

Nowhere is the value of this approach more evident than in the first two essays in Volume I. In a monograph-length chapter, Veyne offers a startlingly different perspective on Roman history from that to which many of us are accustomed. In Veyne's chapter the Romans emerge less as the embodiments of public consciousness than as the creators of an idea of public life as an arena in which private desires for fame, glory and domestic tyranny may be played out on a grand scale, and in which the social presentation of the self was governed by a rigid cultural code. Peter Brown's brilliantly contrasting essay offers a new perspective on the transformations of the Roman-Hellenistic world in terms of new public demands on the private self. Brown considers the changing concepts of "simplicity of heart," a notion that originated in Judaism but was rapidly appropriated by Christians and employed to discourage any difference between the inner and outer human being. This new openness to the eyes of God and the community launched a great shift in morality.

The studies of Veyne and Brown are followed by an illuminating essay by Yvon Thébert, which opens up a theme that runs through the first two volumes—the relationship between private life and domestic architecture. Volume I concludes with a study by Michel Rouche on northern Europe between the year 400 and the end of the first millennium and one by Evelyne Patlagean on private life in the Byzantine empire in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The broad sweep of the chronology and choice of themes in the first collection stand in sharp contrast to the thematic concentration of Volume II. Limited chiefly to France and Italy, and to a set of highly selective topics, the book nevertheless sustains the principles that characterize Volume I. It succeeds in bringing to life a society and culture that

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was indeed the origin of our own but that has always been depicted as barbaric (or irrational or primitive) and full of gaudy pageantry as a substitute for human life and feelings. Five chapters dealing with aristocratic households, the literary depiction of the self, the design and use of private living space (in wonderful contrast to Thébert's essay on North African domestic architecture) and the problematic topic of the emergence of the individual demonstrate the very best of French medieval historiography.

These are readily accessible books—profusely and intelligently illustrated, generously margined, and wisely and clearly written. They invite a profound reconsideration of our notions about much of the past and suggest new ways of looking at it. As we make them part of our surroundings, on bookshelves or coffee tables (they are suitable for either), we ought to be inspired to think about our own notion and practice of private life. But we (and Veyne, Duby and their colleagues) ought to think as well about public life, which is illuminated here largely in contrast with the private. And about those occasions when—as in the case of Argentina's Las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo—an outraged and despairing private life has risen up against the deadly apparatus of politicians and soldiers that has so often characterized public life and power in this century. □

A Designing Radical

BARBARA JONES

RADICAL BY DESIGN: The Life and Style of Elizabeth Hawes. *By Bettina Berch. E.P. Dutton. 214 pp. $19.50.*

One morning in the late 1930s, American fashion designer Elizabeth Hawes strode up Fifth Avenue sans hat and sans (most shocking) lipstick, thereby stopping pedestrian traffic. From the Bergdorf Goodman shop window, Mr. Goodman himself exclaimed, "That woman is crazy!"

A nut case. As a *New Yorker* columnist writing from Paris on fashion in 1927 (under the pen name Parisite) she expressed the odd idea that an expensive article of clothing ought to last: "Go ahead and buy an original little Chanel around here if you want to. And watch it drop to pieces on your back the second wearing." In her best seller *Fashion Is Spinach* (1938) and in newspaper articles such as "Don't Dress Like Mata Hari if You Have a Flowered-Chiffon Mind," Hawes urged women to ignore the profit-driven influence of the fashion industry and dress to please and express themselves. In *Men Can Take It* (1939) and in a 1938 *Reader's Digest* contribution, "Clothes Make the Man—Uncomfortable!" she suggested that men also slaved for fashion. According to Hawes there was no reason a man couldn't wear bright colors or skirts—except fear of his own homosexual impulses.

Barbara Jones writes fiction and is associate editor of Grand Street.

That crazy Elizabeth Hawes. She thought clothes ought to be wearable. She preferred the pursuit of style—of design so perfect it need never change—to the pursuit of fashion. Blue jeans, Hawes said, had style. She wore them herself, even in the city. As a consultant to a manufacturer of children's clothing, she recommended mass-producing overalls in tiny sizes without altering their perfect design. The manufacturer dismissed her idea. (Osh Kosh B'Gosh, if he'd only known.) Hawes wanted a democratization of fashion: She believed industry could do better than pump out faddy, tasteless clothes, leaving style for the rich alone. And if the clothes she saw in the Soviet Union were ugly ("Crepe de Chine with Tractors!"), at least they were well made.

Hand in hand with Hawes's dizzy fashion ideas went other wacky concepts. She thought pregnancy normal; she wouldn't disguise her own under baby-doll dresses. She thought men capable of child care and urged equalizing the household responsibilities of husbands and wives. During the Depression, she paid each worker at Hawes Inc. according to need. When she worked in an airplane factory during World War II, unsafe conditions shocked her. When she traveled outside New York City as an educator for the United Auto Workers, she despised the racism, class division and sexism she saw: "Detroit I Love You . . . in Spite of Your Weather and Fascists," she wrote. The reactionary views of many women especially upset her. In *Anything But Love* (1948) she unmasked the Happy Housewife as a hurtful myth. In 1946 she talked publicly about her bout with cancer.

With *Radical by Design: The Life and Style of Elizabeth Hawes*, Bettina Berch has rediscovered a woman of character, wit and uncommon common sense. Hawes named rather than numbered her dress designs: The People's Choice, Five Year Plan, Nazi, The Yellow Peril, the Revolt of the Masses; and from the chapter titles on the contents page to the final sentence of *Radical by Design*, we feel Berch caught up in Hawes's sense of fun. The book sweeps along in enthusiastic summary.

Hawes was born in 1903, and in the sixty-eight years that followed she spied on Chanel and Dior, stealing their designs for a counterfeiter; headed her own American fashion house; wrote for *The New Yorker* and *PM* and authored nine books. She was married unhappily twice: to Ralph Jester, a Hollywood designer, and to Joseph Losey, the theater and film director. She had a son with Losey. She had love affairs. Her F.B.I. file was a fat one. The Bureau noticed her work on the Committee for the Care of Young Children in Wartime, her teaching for the U.A.W. and her employment at *PM* and combined its notations about her with those on another Elizabeth Hawes, failing to recognize that it had created one impossibly busy woman. As a result of the F.B.I.'s questioning of her customers and colleagues, Elizabeth Hawes the designer and writer found travel and job opportunities limited. In the 1950s and 1960s she lived in California, designing some, writing some. In 1971 she drank herself to death in the Chelsea Hotel in New York City.

These bare bones may suggest more of a spine than Berch gives Hawes's life in *Radical by Design.* This book is delightful to read, a page-turner reminiscent of those hero-worshiping biographies I devoured as a child. But we want more in adult biographies. Unfortunately, there's no thesis in Berch's book, no thread, psychological or otherwise.

The facts hint at complications in Hawes's character and life that Berch does not address. What of Hawes's attraction to fashion versus her decision to debunk it? What of Hawes's longtime financial dependence on wealthy friends versus her snide comments about the rich, "a group of people whose lives were nothing to me"? Hawes nearly began and certainly ended her life a designer: She sold her first dresses to a local shop at age 12 and was fashioning clothes well into her 60s, knitting when she didn't have the

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cash or facilities to work with other materials. Why, then, does Berch's life of Hawes impress us as a haphazard one?

Was Hawes's life tossed by some personal demon? Or was her way obstructed by World War II and the cold war? This book doesn't tell us. According to Berch, Hawes was reticent about her personal life and left no paper trail, but it shouldn't be impossible for a biographer to discover other sources. I casually asked an 82-year-old New Yorker if she knew Hawes. "Of course," she shot back. "She was a real weirdo. Always trying to shock her mother."

Today Hawes's designs for living look prescient. In the photo on the back cover of *Radical by Design*, she lounges in a soft jumper and jersey, in ankle-high socks and cloth loafers, in what might be an outfit from the hottest downtown boutique. What would she think of the latest fashion among little girls in the Central Park playgrounds—who, I'm told, are immobilized and categorized in frilly dresses and uncomfortable shiny shoes? □

FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

Dangerous Liaisons
36 Fillette
Voices of Sarafina!
A Hungarian Fairy Tale

To appreciate how well Catherine Breillat has succeeded with *36 Fillette*, her merciless, clear-headed comedy of sexual initiation, it helps to see *Dangerous Liaisons* as well. On one side, a contemporary, low-budget French production, enlivened by dozens of dead-accurate observations of human behavior; on the other, a big-budget, Anglo-American period piece, which labors for two hours without settling on a consistent tone or a reason for having been made. Both films are about seduction as a power play; both give prominence to a teen-age girl with a heaving bosom. But what a difference between the girls!

Cécile, the ingénue of *Dangerous Liaisons*, is a pawn of the Marquise de Merteuil (Glenn Close) and the Vicomte de Valmont (John Malkovich). He is bent on maintaining a reputation as the most notorious rake in Paris. She is on a crusade "to dominate your sex," as she tells the Vicomte, "and avenge my own." When first seen, the two are engaged in their morning toilette, arming for a battle that already has strewn the field with victims; no worthy opponents remain, except for each other. Since the story of these sexual warriors has been around for a couple of hundred years, first in the novel by Choderlos de Laclos and more recently in the stage version by Christopher Hampton, on which the film is based, I doubt I'm giving anything away when I say the affair ends badly on all sides. But the final distribution of rewards and punishments is not the point in such entertainments. The real question is, What sort of diversions does the film offer along the way?

The traditional answer, first of all, is lavish costumes and decor. In this respect, *Dangerous Liaisons* amply satisfies the audience. There's even good music, supplied by George Fenton in a pastiche of eighteenth-century styles. On top of that, the director, Stephen Frears, sets up an extended comparison between the characters' lives and the goings-on in classical opera. As spectacle, then, *Dangerous Liaisons* provides everything one could want, though Frears, by filming mostly in close-ups and tight two-shots, repeatedly takes back what he's given.

One senses that Frears—who is best known for two masterworks of polycultural realism, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*—must feel ambivalent about satisfying an appetite for lace, brocade and gilded halls. That ambivalence is evoked still more strongly by the other elements an audience traditionally wants in a costume drama: sharp, memorable dialogue and actors worth idolizing.

When Hampton aspires to period elegance, he cranks out platitudes instead: "Those who are most worthy of love are rarely made happy by it," and so forth. Worse still, when the Vicomte tries to talk his way into the ladies' drawers, Hampton's writing becomes windy, as if the strategy were to render women helpless by putting them to sleep. The actors, given this high-hurdles course, which requires them to race along the straightaway of garrulity and then leap periodically over an aphorism, must run with their parts as best they can.

Of the leads, Glenn Close performs with the greatest aplomb. Like the others, she speaks in an undisguised American accent, striking a deliberately off-key contemporary note amid the *ancien régime* artifice. She has the right kind of stage training, though, to put across her

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lines without straining herself or jarring the audience. Malkovich, whose stage work has been of quite a different sort, is more problematic—intentionally so, I think. Frears clearly did not want a matinee idol in the role, since the audience might then imagine that women went to bed with the Vicomte for their pleasure. The main point, of course, is that the Vicomte feels no need to take the desires of women into account. Hence Malkovich, who here gives off all the sex appeal of Bugs Bunny. The choice, on the part of both actor and director, is sound. But then they go a step further, letting Malkovich undercut the role with his flat regional accent and loose-limbed American walk. At times, he resembles nothing so much as a sulky teen-ager at the mall.

So the film won't stay put in the eighteenth century. It repeatedly steps out of its period trappings; and when it does, it seems to look around in bewilderment, as if wondering what all the fuss is about. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Vicomte's seduction of the virtuous Mme. de Tourvel (Michelle Pfeiffer). Somebody on the set—the director, one of the actors, maybe the caterer—would have needed to believe in sexual virtue (at least provisionally) to make this subject come alive. Instead, we get a lot of sound and fury about chastity from people who seem to have heard about it, once.

Does it make any difference? The audience, presumably, has as little conviction about these matters as do the filmmakers. One could argue that the film puts us at a distance from the sexual mores of the past the better to examine them. Or, more likely, one could say that Frears and Hampton are giving us a feminist *Dangerous Liaisons*, in which the status of women as commodities, then as now, is emphasized by a certain bloodlessness in the storytelling. You might well see the film in that light—though if you do, I suspect you'll have to admit it seems a dull and pious way to deal with a lively, scandalous subject. Besides, any attempt at feminist reinterpretation becomes unconvincing, given the presence of that overripe adolescent, Cécile.

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First she is seduced, much to her horror and shame. Then she is persuaded to make the best of her situation. Finally, we see her as the delighted acolyte of the Vicomte, eagerly performing services, as he puts it, that one would hesitate to ask of a professional. Here is the moment when I would ask you to awake from the confused dream of *Dangerous Liaisons* to the harsh but entertaining reality of *36 Fillette*.

For here, too, we have an overripe adolescent learning about sex. Lili (Delphine Zentout) is a 14-year-old from the suburbs of Paris—a short, chubby, baby-faced brat who keeps her hair combed over her face and goes hitchhiking in black underwear. She is on vacation in Biarritz with her grim, petit-bourgeois parents, camping out in a trailer just down the road from the luxury hotels. She is bored; she is angry; she is tired of being a virgin but feels, in the time-honored fashion of 14-year-olds, that everybody she meets is disgusting. Given her bad attitude toward the entire human species, how is she to make love? Her method is to jump into the middle of the road one night and flag down a car with the use of one hand and two breasts, thereby hooking up with a man who might remove the embarrassment of her virginity.

His name is Maurice (Etienne Chicot), and he is, in his own way, every bit as unappealing as Lili: a fortyish entrepreneur, well-to-do and apparently idle, whose attitude toward women seems to be somewhere to the right of the Vicomte de Valmont's. Lili wants him to make love to her but can't stand the sight of him. "Don't you realize your life is over?" she asks, having just given him a soft, wet kiss. She rubs her head against his shoulder and says she ought to call the cops. She insults his age, his taste in music and his intelligence, then finishes the sentence by calling him an asshole, all the while clinging to him. For his part, Maurice admits he ought to have known better. "It's awful," he says, his face turning gray right before the camera. "I let myself get carried away by you."

What's most remarkable in all this is Catherine Breillat's concentration, both as writer and director, on the minute details of a transaction that both thrills Lili and mortifies her. The scenes of seduction happen almost in real time; the audience is spared nothing, even during one of the funniest, most appalling blow jobs ever put on film. *36 Fillette* has its own problems with artifice—most notably a star turn near the beginning by Jean-Pierre Léaud, who descends as if from heaven to interview Lili—but it overcomes them with a precise, unsentimental depiction of sexual battle. Here you may find just what is lacking in *Dangerous Liaisons*: bodily fluids, including tears.

Voices of Sarafina!, a documentary by Nigel Noble, presents boisterous musical numbers from the Broadway show and sober interviews with the young men and women who make up the cast. Conceived by the writer, director and composer Mbongeni Ngema, *Sarafina!* is partly an entertainment and partly a political outreach program for black South Africans. As Ngema reminds his cast early in the film, "The white government of South Africa has an ambassador to talk to Americans and put its views across. The black people of South Africa don't have an ambassador here." So the cast members take the place of diplomats, playing out a story about the student uprising in Soweto in 1976. That's the general idea, anyhow. The specifics are another matter, which makes *Voices of Sarafina!* more politically challenging than the play and also more disturbing on the personal level.

Over and over throughout the film, one runs up against the vast difference between how the cast members behave on their own and how they've been taught to behave onstage, between the simple, plainly stated facts of documentary and the rhetoric of theatrical gestures. Pat Mlaba, who plays the role of Colgate, talks with shy dignity about learning the tricks of vocal projection. Then we see just what he's learned as he appears in an excerpt from the show, mugging and gesturing like a cross between Frankenstein's monster and Jimmie Walker. Another young man explains to the interviewer that black South Africans "always smile, no matter how hard it is. We laugh even if someone's dead." A young woman in the cast concurs; yet neither of them smiles when saying it. When the cast members, during a tearful, deeply moving encounter with Miriam Makeba, join in singing the anthem of the African National Congress, they are grave and upright. When performing onstage for "all those old ladies on Broadway," as Ngema puts it, they can't stop wriggling and jumping and kicking up their legs, even when leg kicks don't have anything to do with the business at hand.

Why must the actors be so emphati-

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cally, hugely *up* all the time? The question becomes more pressing when one sees the film's location shots of black townships in South Africa and compares them to the hokey ruckus on Broadway. If one recalls Erika Munk's allegations in *The Village Voice* that Ngema made a habit of beating the young women in the cast, one's worst suspicions begin to emerge. As a friend remarked to me, "Sure, there are great musical numbers in *Sarafina!* They went to all these black kids and said, 'If you can sing and dance well enough, you can get out of South Africa.' Boy, do they sing and dance."

No doubt that's too cynical by half. Ngema's sincerity, and the cast's, is perfectly evident; and if Ngema and his producers had any mixed motives in putting on the show, I doubt they've been more duplicitous than any other humans. Still, *Voices of Sarafina!*, while attempting to celebrate the makers of the musical, winds up doing something more. It makes one see how these young people have willingly pulled themselves out of shape for something which they understand as a political goal, but which threatens at times to become pure jive. By all means see *Voices of Sarafina!*—but be prepared for something more unsettling than the puff piece that seems to have been intended.

Although it will have ended its brief run in New York by the time this sees print, *A Hungarian Fairy Tale* demands comment, not only for its own merits but for being the most recent work by Gyula Gazdag. Among his earlier films are *The Resolution*, an astonishing feature-length documentary about nuts-and-bolts politics in Hungary, and *Lost Illusions*, an enthralling, modern-day version of Balzac's novel, translated to Budapest in the 1960s. (The makers of *Dangerous Liaisons* could learn a few things from Gazdag about adapting the French classics.) With *A Hungarian Fairy Tale*, Gazdag has challenged himself to do something new and strange, with mixed results.

At its core, the film is a satire about a curious Hungarian law: Any child born without a legal father is officially issued the name of a fictitious one. In this way, the child is spared the embarrassment of being called a bastard, only to discover, upon gaining adulthood, that the father was invented by a bureaucrat. Gazdag has called this law "well-meaning but at the same time profoundly inhuman. . . . This is a special Hungarian way of thinking." To examine its implications, he has come up with a special Hungarian way of filmmaking.

Imagine the Budapest opera house during a performance of *The Magic Flute*. As Sarastro prepares Tamino for his final trial, a handsome man in one of the boxes catches the eye of a beautiful woman seated in the orchestra. The people around her fade into darkness; she alone, in the lustrous black-and-white photography, glows with a spectral light. While the music plays on, the film shows the man and woman meeting after the opera, embracing by the river, then parting. And, still without dialogue, it shows the aftermath: the birth of little Andris.

As in many fairy tales, the boy grows up dreaming of his absent father. He imagines heroic quests, prompted partly by the cartoons on television and partly by the overture to *The Magic Flute*, which his mother plays for him as bedtime music. Then comes the catastrophe: As the mother walks along the street, that unearthly light plays over her face once more, and she's brained by a falling brick. Andris, now 10, is orphaned. But he doesn't know it. He thinks he's got a father somewhere and intends to find him.

Up to this point, the film has been magical. What follows, till very near the end, is more plodding than fantastic, as Andris gets in and out of scrapes, while the bureaucrat who invented his father takes off on a journey of his own. Paths meet, as they must; and then the *Magic Flute* conceit returns with a vengeance. Pursued by Boy Scouts armed with rifles, Andris and the bureaucrat and a helpful young woman all take refuge on top of a monumental statue of an eagle, which comes to life with much metallic creaking and bears them away.

I'm not all that sure what Mozart's opera has to do with any of this, nor have I figured out why *A Hungarian Fairy Tale* begins with the last act and ends with the first. All I can say is that the film, having subsided into the doldrums during a long middle section, literally takes off at the end. The bureaucrat's files have been reduced to ashes; the Boy Scout leader, that symbol of nationalist brutality, lies dead on the floor of a crowded train. Andris will never find his father, but he takes off into some other dimension in the company of his new nuclear family: a young woman who seems to have nothing better to do, and a burned-out paper-shuffler who is starting to look like Joseph Beuys. It's the Hungarian equivalent of a happy ending. See it yourself, if you can, and marvel. □

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LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 146*)

audience was cheering about. Kors's letter neglects the context in which he gave his talk: This was not the typical academic conference but a meeting billed by the organizers as "the beginning of a movement . . . to end the servitude of the university to forces with contempt for intellectual values"—forces they identified as feminists, radicals and minorities. Kors's talk was not about "how to deal with illegal harassment." The real problem on campus, he suggested, is not racism or sexual harassment but rather the "assaults upon academic freedom" posed by the rules against harassment.

Who is it that Kors recommends as targets for ridicule? He's right that he did not advocate the ridicule of blacks, gays and feminists. He advocates ridicule of black, gay and feminist "representatives" and "movements." That's the argument that made him the hero of the meeting. Ridicule is appropriate, Kors argues, because these campus groups do not represent the "individual minds" of their constituencies and because they are advocates of "thought control." His audience understood what he meant: Ridicule the black organizations for defending racial awareness programs, ridicule the gay and lesbian representatives for asserting a "group identity," ridicule the women's centers for proposing sexual harassment guidelines.

I believe Alan Kors when he says he opposes racial and sexual harassment, and agree that we should recognize our differences. I don't share his view that racial harassment guidelines are a greater threat to the university than racism: I think it's wrong for faculty members to ridicule the students who have been fighting racial and sexual harassment. *Jon Wiener*

CARBIDE'S CARBON COPY

Pahoa, Hawaii

In his review of the book *Corporate Crime and Violence* ["White-Collar Thuggery," Nov. 28, 1988], Robert Sherrill notes the Bhopal tragedy, stating, "Stop to think what the results would have been if such a thing had happened in this country. But, as everyone knows, India is a nation of wogs, and wogs don't count. . . . You can kill a great many wogs and not have to pay much, if anything. Union Carbide didn't. Lawsuits could have fixed Union Carbide's hash, if they had been handled in this country. The company could have been wiped out."

But Union Carbide did commit a similar crime in this country and paid practically nothing to the families of workers who were killed or injured. I refer to the Hawk's Nest tragedy in West Virginia where in the early 1930s Union Carbide drilled a tunnel through pure silica to provide hydroelectric power for its chemical plants along the Kanawha River. Of the 4,929 workers hired for construction of the tunnel, 476 died on the job and some 1,500 died elsewhere from silicosis. Seventy percent of the workers were blacks. Anticipating many deaths on the job, the company hired an undertaker to bury the dead at $55 a head. Some were interred in a nearby cornfield.

Some $6 million in lawsuits were filed by the victims or their families. The first cases, representing 300 victims, were settled out of court. Their lawyers accepted $130,000. The lawyers pocketed half as their fee, deducted $1,000 for court costs, leaving only $213 for each victim.

The incident received practically no publicity in the media, except in the local newspapers and in some of the left-wing press. Even when sympathizers won a hearing by a congressional committee headed by New York Representative Vito Marcantonio, the nation's press paid little attention, ignoring basic questions of worker safety and compensation. The *Time* magazine item on the hearing was reported under "Medicine." And a 1986 book, *The Hawk's Nest Incident: America's Worst Industrial Disaster*, by Martin Cherniak (Yale University Press), received practically no reviews in major magazines (including *The Nation*).

A black folk song, "Silicosis Is Killing Me," best describes the workers' plight:

Now silicosis, you dirty robber and thief,
Robbed me of my right to live.
And all you brought to me was grief.
I was diggin' that tunnel for six bits a day.
Didn't know I was diggin' my own grave—
Silicosis eatin' my lungs away.

William Reich

STARRY-EYED JUSTICE

Berkeley, Calif.

Marvin Frankel holds, with Ed Sorel concurring ["Letters," Dec. 5, 1988], that we should withhold judgment until or unless a jury has found the accused rich and powerful of the world guilty beyond a reasonable doubt—including, presumably: Oliver North, Henry Kissinger, Idi Amin, Ronald Reagan, the Helmsleys, Noriega and William Casey, along with the responsible people of Union Carbide and the other thirty-five murderous corporations described by Russell Mokhiber in *Corporate Crime and Violence* and in Robert Sherrill's review. We would probably have a better chance of seeing justice done if we tried prayer, visualizing them all behind bars, or wishing upon a star. *Steve Juniper*

CORRECTION

In our January 23 editorial "S&L Time Bomb," the amount required to make the nation's faltering S&Ls solvent should have been cited as $400 per American.

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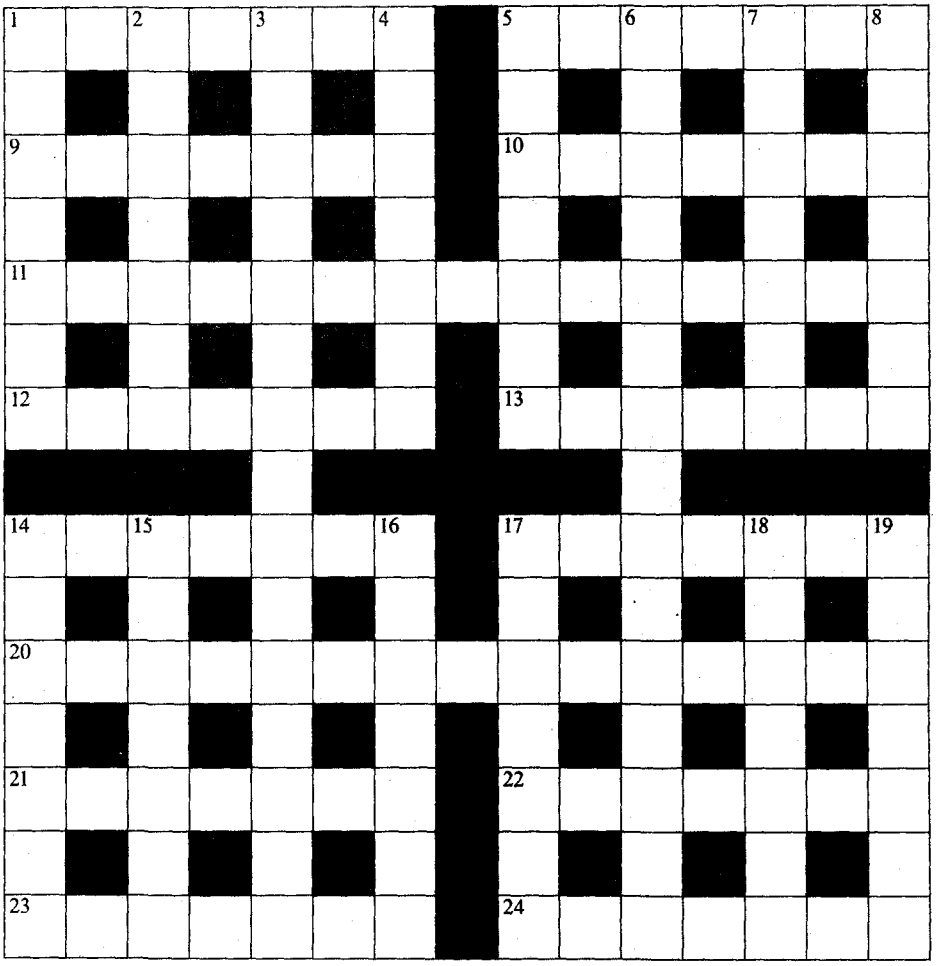
E	■	■	■	H	■	■	■	■	■	O	■	■	■	S
V	I	O	L	E	T	■	I	N	C	I	D	E	N	T
E	■	N	■	W	■	B	■	I	■	S	■	D	■	I
■	D	A	Y	O	F	R	E	C	K	O	N	I	N	G
U	■	R	■	R	■	I	■	T	■	N	■	T	■	A
S	T	A	L	L	E	D	■	A	N	I	M	I	S	T
E	■	F	■	D	■	L	■	T	■	N	■	O	■	E
R	I	T	E	■	D	E	T	E	R	G	E	N	T	S

Crossword Puzzle No. 2228

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 What lilacs did for Whitman to make a non-distinct appearance in place of repose. (7)
5 The formic compound? With trouble inside, some take it. (7)
9 Reduced to smoke in Syria? (7)
10 A mimicking performance associated with the pilot—involving the main part of the strip. (7)
11 In which things are commonly held to be what the holder of such as 12 might be charged with? (5, 10)
12 Jackets might be outdated when applied to what might become roaches—the sort most of us have no use for. (7)
13 Did one give Bunyan's Pilgrim that sinking feeling? (7)
14 One of these might be wood, or possibly iron—describing the seat of power. (7)
17 In the light of a classic one, was a truthful man hard to find? (7)
20 Would "Yes! We have no bananas!" imply one for the specific shopper? (9,6)
21 Where a fir cone comes from, obviously. (7)
22 In "La Mer" I can always see it stretched from ocean to ocean. (7)
23 Put under, in a sense, but whose date deliberately displays it? (7)
24 Acceptable ideas might with one, according to such as Edith or Osbert. (7)

DOWN

1 Such a glass vessel should always have a ring? (One associated with the telephone should have quite a shock!) (4,3)
2 What can't be considered in, is due to being so different. (7)
3 What the worker who strives for perfection does with his raw material, although the disappointed ones sometimes do, too. (4,3,4,2,2)
4 What some boring things do, to a point, might be considered what George reputedly went for. (7)
5 Although they are not all the struggling type, they are found here in dire straits. (7)
6 The lender who does might never profit from his business, and cares not a whit! (5,2,8)
7 When this goes off, it might be a period for labor disputants. (7)
8 Fed up with the avowed goals? (Someone usually does, when one is charged.) (7)
14 Goes to the other side, with obvious flaws. (7)
15 Perhaps an old-fashioned way to get put down, but in the case of possible ruin, study up on it. (7)
16 Asparagus might be handled by the unmannerly diner this way. (7)
17 Such ill-behaved rascals were once common as crew members. (7)
18 Designed to be snuffed into the nose, or to cause sneezing, implying some hesitation with a well-known foreign flower. (7)
19 A member of certain groups of people such as Aztecs, taking me out of the late human sort. (7)

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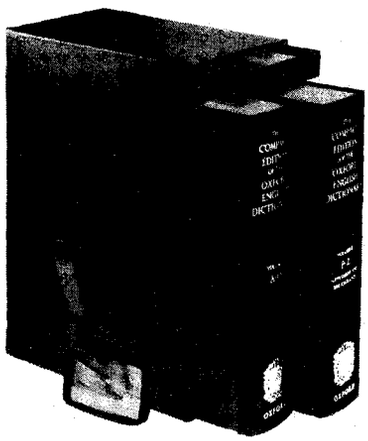

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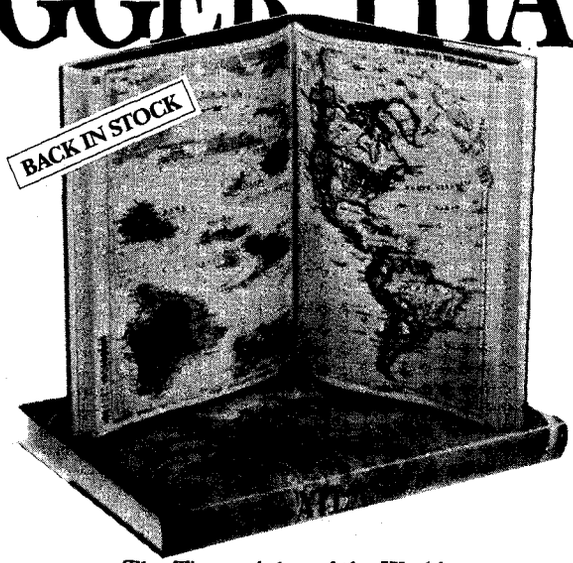

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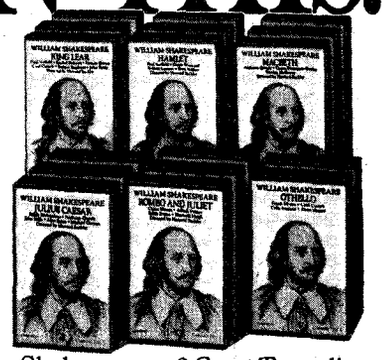

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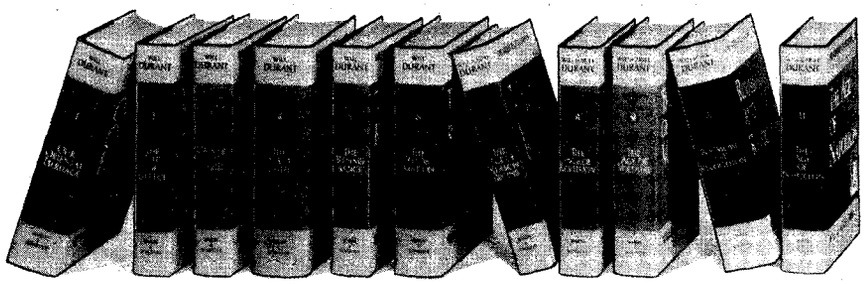

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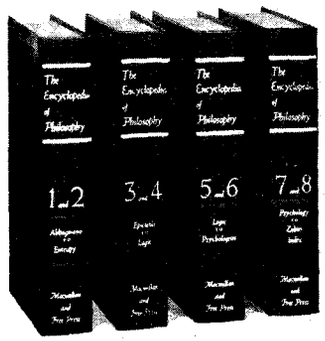

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